

American Classical Education Tennessee

Board Agenda - May 30, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

Via [Zoom](#): Meeting ID 838 8864 3054; Passcode: 781611

1. Call to order
2. Public comment: Individuals wishing to speak must sign up in advance [on this form](#).
3. Consent Agenda - vote
 - a. Approval of February 19, 2024 minutes
4. Board member and officer election
 - a. Officers
New chair
Vice chair
 - b. Renewal/staggering of board member terms (proposed)
Joey Hale (2022-2025)
Darrell Woodard (2023-2025)
Dennis Pearson (2023-26)
Michelle Garcia (2024-2027)
Tricia Stickel (2024-2027)
5. Policy approval
Drafts of these policies were part of the approved charter school applications. The board needs to formally adopt them for ACAR.
 - a. Family Handbook
 - b. Faculty/Staff Handbook
6. Rutherford County update
 - a. School (Phill)
 - b. Facility (Patrick)
7. Madison County update (Patrick)
8. 2024-2025 board meetings
9. Adjourn

Public Comment Period: Pursuant to TCA 8-44-112, the board reserves up to 20 minutes for members of the public to comment on agenda items the board intends to vote on at the meeting. Each speaker is allowed up to 2 minutes to speak. The number of speakers is limited to 10. Members of the public who want to comment should register prior to the start of the meeting by signing up [online](#).

American Classical Education Tennessee

Board Minutes - February 19, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order: Board members Michelle Garcia, Dolores Gresham, Joey Hale, Dennis Pearson, and Tricia Stickell were present. Darrell Woodard was absent. Rich Haglund, Patrick Whalen, and Phill Schwenk were also present.
2. Approval of Agenda: Ms. Stickell moved approval, Mr. Hale seconded, and the agenda was approved by voice vote.
3. Approval of January 11, 2024 minutes: Mr. Pearson moved approval, Ms. Stickel seconded, and the agenda was approved by voice vote.
4. Rutherford County update
 - a. Building. Mr. Whalen noted that the Foundation has signed a purchase sale agreement for a facility in La Vergne.
 - b. Student recruitment: Mr. Schwenk shared that, with an anticipated location in place, recruitment efforts will increase.
 - c. Personnel: Mr. Schwenk attended the job fair hosted by Hillsdale last week and is working with a PR firm to invite job candidates. He is focused short-term on hiring the office manager and the student services director.
 - d. Charter School Program (CSP) grant: The application will be submitted Feb. 20, for both the Rutherford and Madison County schools.
5. Madison County update: Mr. Whalen shared that the Foundation has retained a search firm to find a head of school.
 - a. Charter contract with Commission. Mr. Hale moved approval of the contract and Ms. Garcia seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.
6. Services agreement with ACE Foundation. Ms. Stickel moved approval of the services agreement and Mr. Pearson seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.
7. Next board meeting: May 6 at 10 a.m.
8. Adjourn at 10:28



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY

RUTHERFORD

**American Classical Academy
Rutherford**

Family Handbook

2024-2025

Contact Information

American Classical Academy Rutherford
2 Ingram Boulevard
La Vergne, Tennessee 37086

Phone:

Email: info@rutherfordclassical.org

School Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Before-School Drop-off: 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.

After-School Pick-up: 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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Head of School's Welcome

Dear Families and Students,

Welcome to American Classical Academy Rutherford (ACAR)! We are delighted that you chose to partner with us in the important task of rearing your child to be virtuous - demonstrating good character; and to have a sound mind full of knowledge, seeking wisdom. At ACAR, our mission is *to train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich Classical Education in the liberal arts and sciences utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtue*. This is difficult work, but we believe that in building an institution that daily commits to training individuals who a) practice decorum, b) read and dialogue about great books and ideas to gain significant understanding, and c) learn for the sake of learning, we will form students who seek the True, do the Good, and relish the Beautiful.

As established in ACAR's Honor Code, it is our intention to fashion individuals who demonstrate courage, moderation, justice, responsibility, friendship, prudence, and wisdom. Students will come to know and embody these traits through their purposeful communication with school faculty and other students. Additionally, students will master these traits through active participation in rigorous, content-rich classical curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences. As a school, we are keenly aware of the central role that families have in the formation of their children. It is our hope and expectation to partner with each family. We hope that, each day, families are able to model good behavior and to support the accomplishment of the academic work presented in their students' coursework.

With great anticipation, I look forward to the coming school year! I will continue to work with students, their families, and with ACAR staff in a shared effort to build a school that produces students who are intellectually and morally virtuous citizens.

Sincerely,

Phillip Schwenk
Head of School
American Classical Academy Rutherford

The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defense against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments. By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes. For famished nature will be avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head.
(C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*)

Mission

The mission of American Classical Academy Rutherford is to train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtue.

School Virtues

- Prudence | “I will make wise, well thought-out decisions before acting.”
- Justice | “I will treat everyone with the fairness and respect they deserve.”
- Moderation | “I will exercise self-control in all of my actions.”
- Courage | “I will do the right thing, even when it is unpopular or difficult.”
- Responsibility | “I will do my duty and accept the consequences of my actions.”
- Friendship | “I will treat others with respect and seek friends who make me better.”
- Wisdom | “I will seek those things which are good, true, and beautiful.

School Pledge

- I will learn the True.
- I will do the Good.
- I will love the Beautiful.

School Honor Code

An American Classical Academy Rutherford student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. An American Classical Academy Rutherford student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, responsibility, friendship, and wisdom.

A Charter School & Barney Charter School Initiative Affiliate

American Classical Academy Rutherford (ACAR) is a public charter school, which is a tuition-free, public school operated by an independent board of trustees and authorized by Rutherford County Schools (TN). Charter schools are given flexibility to articulate a distinct mission, design a curriculum around the mission, and hire faculty who can best deliver mission-guided instruction. The result is a unique and innovative educational model that responds to the needs of students and families that have chosen ACAR.

A principal value of all charter schools is that parents have the primary right, authority, and responsibility to direct the education of their children. ACAR's work rests upon a partnership between the family and the school.

American Classical Academy Rutherford is one of many schools in the country that is part of Hillsdale College's Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI). The Barney Charter School Initiative's mission is to promote the founding of classical charter schools and excellence in their teaching and operations, to the end that public-school students may be educated in the liberal arts and sciences and receive instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue. As part of the BCSI, ACAR teachers are provided ongoing professional development that supports the effective planning and implementation of classical education.

American Classical Academy Rutherford, assisted by Hillsdale College, will seek to present a classical education to students that includes the following key characteristics:

1. A curriculum that is content-rich, balanced, and strong across the four disciplines of math, science, literature, and history
2. Instruction in the Western tradition through history, literature, philosophy, and the fine arts
3. Study of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions
4. Explicit instruction in phonics and grammar
5. A school culture of moral virtue, decorum, respect, discipline, and studiousness among both students and faculty
6. A well-educated, articulate and compassionate faculty who use traditional, teacher-led methods of instruction
7. An approach to instruction that acknowledges objective standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth
8. The study of Latin as a requirement for all students
9. A commitment to use technology effectively without diminishing the faculty leadership that is crucial to academic achievement
10. A plan to serve Grades K through 12 (even if the school must open with fewer grades) so as to provide continuity and a recurrent examination of subjects throughout a student's career

Purpose of the American Classical Academy Rutherford Family Handbook

The purpose and intention of the *ACAR Family Handbook* is to clearly define and describe ACAR's mission and procedures. While the handbook may be amended and improved over time as the school matures, the core values and intentions of the school and the handbook will remain constant.

All parents and students are expected to read the handbook and they demonstrate agreement with the handbook by signing the ACAR Parent and Student Compact. In this way, both ACAR and families display a willingness to work together to classically educate each student in an environment that seeks the Truth, does the Good, and relishes the Beautiful.

The *ACAR Family Handbook* is subject to review and may be updated or changed at any time upon request/approval of the Board of Trustees.

Academic Policies

Education Priorities

American Classical Academy Rutherford desires that all students receive a classical liberal arts education. To this end ACAR has determined the following educational priorities:

- Basic cognitive skills and academic fundamentals: reading-writing-mathematics;
- Core subjects: English language and literature; history, geography, and government; physical and biological sciences; mathematics;
- Other classical subjects: music, art, Latin;
- Auxiliary subjects: foreign languages, physical education, performing arts, other social sciences; and
- Extracurricular activities as defined by the Head of School.

The K-8 curriculum will follow the Core Knowledge Sequence. Occasionally, ACAR will diverge from the Core Knowledge Sequence in order to raise the standards in teaching a particular skill or subject. The Head of School will determine these instances. The Head of School will ensure that all skill areas in the K-8 Core Knowledge Sequence are taught at some point in grades K-8.

Teachers must develop their courses under the direction of the Head of School, who is the chief academic leader and accountable to the Board.

Grading Policy

Grading and the administration of grades is not the primary goal of education and educators. The grade a student receives in a class is subordinate to the knowledge the student acquires. Still, grades are a useful tool to evaluate the extent to which a student has mastered a particular subject. Therefore, grades will be assigned in all classes and subjects. American Classical Academy Rutherford will assign grades in order to accurately reflect the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject.

Grade inflation is discouraged. In relation to the student's performance, the following letter grades have these meanings:

- Mastery (A)
- Proficiency (B)
- Sufficiency/Competence (C)
- Insufficiency (D)
- Failing (F)

In addition to these general parameters, American Classical Academy Rutherford uses a 4.0 grading scale. The letter and numerical grades for this system are listed below:

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	GPA
A	94-100%	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	84-86	3.0
B-	80-83	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	74-76	2.0
C-	70-73	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	64-66	1.0
D-	60-63	0.7
F	0-59	0.0

The grading scale as defined above is utilized for all students with the exception of kindergarten and first grade, where the scale will reflect A (Mastery), B (Proficiency), C (Sufficiency), and I (Needs Improvement and Remediation). Incompletes will only be given under special circumstances and must be approved by the Head of School. Parents and students will be regularly informed of the student’s progress.

ACAR will use the Uniform Grading System established by the Tennessee State Board of Education to calculate eligibility for post secondary financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation.

“Extra credit,” whether to make up for work not turned in on time or to increase a student’s grade, is discouraged at American Classical Academy Rutherford.

Grades will be broken down into four categories and assigned as portions of the student’s overall grade as follows:

- Classwork (includes any work done in class, including class participation): 40%

- Homework: 10%
- Quizzes and other small assessments: 20%
- Tests: 30% (In the Upper School, the final semester assessment: 10%; all other tests: 20%)

Promotion & Retention

The School recognizes that the personal, social, physical, and educational growth of children will vary and that they should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate to their needs at the various stages of their growth.

It shall be the policy of the Board that each student is moved forward in a continuous pattern of achievement and growth that is in harmony with the student's development. A student will be promoted to the succeeding grade level when the student has:

1. Completed the State-mandated requirements at the presently assigned grade;
2. In the opinion of the Head of School and the teachers, achieved the instructional objectives set for the present grade; and,
3. Demonstrated sufficient proficiency to permit the student to move ahead to the educational program of the next grade.

The Head of School shall:

1. Require a student be retained if the student is truant (unexcused absence) for ten percent (10%) or more of the required school days and has failed at least two (2) courses of study, unless the Head of School and the teachers of the failed subjects determine that the student is academically prepared to be promoted;
2. Require that parents are informed in advance of the possibility of retention of a student at grade level; and,
3. Have the final responsibility for determining the promotion or retention of each student, except

Promotion/Retention of Third Grade Students – Interventions

ACAR will promote or retain students in third grade according to Tennessee law. This includes offering students who are not proficient in English language arts (ELA) specific supports for the continued success of those students. For more information about 3rd to 4th grade promotion, please talk with your student's teacher. Additional information is also available from the Tennessee Department of Education: <https://www.tn.gov/education/learning-acceleration.html>.

Homework and Classwork

Homework is a fundamental part of our general academic program. It prepares students for high school and college and for entry into the working world upon graduation. It also helps develop a strong work ethic and habits of organization. Homework's immediate educational purpose is:

- To reinforce skills and concepts and knowledge learned in class;
- To develop good skills and habits of study;

- To practice skills and reinforce knowledge in ways that are not readily accomplished in the classroom;
- To work on assignments, such as the writing of papers, and prepare for exams that require a great deal of sustained, individual attention;
- To prepare for the following day's work so that the most can be made of class time; and
- To inform parents of what is being taught in the classroom.

In addition to regular classroom assignments, we would like each younger child to read, or be read to, at least three times a week and preferably every day. It is our hope that each ACAR student grows and matures to be a thoughtful reader enabling the student to gain in wisdom, knowledge and insight as they grow into adulthood. We believe that becoming a competent reader is critical to being a good student and an important step in being able to explore the physical world and the world of ideas. Reading to a child encourages the child's growth and it elevates and informs conversation within the family. By reading in front of your children, you model good habits and reinforce your expectations.

The expected daily homework time allotment for each grade is as follows:

Kindergarten	10 minutes plus family reading time
Grade 1	10 minutes plus family reading time
Grade 2	20 minutes plus reading time
Grade 3	30 minutes plus reading time
Grade 4	40 minutes plus reading time
Grade 5	50 minutes plus reading time
Grade 6	60 minutes plus reading time
Grade 7	70 minutes plus reading time
Grade 8	80 minutes plus reading time
Grades 9-12	90-120 minutes plus reading time

The designated times serve as guidelines and may vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the schedule, the student's organizational skills and study habits, the varying abilities of the students, and the nature of the assignments. Students are expected to learn how to use their time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor. It is generally understood that writing papers and studying for exams take more time than regular classroom assignments. For that reason, the end of a term does result in a peak in the homework load. Nonetheless, teachers will make every effort to give assignments in advance, and students will be encouraged to work on those longer assignments steadily, so that students are able to manage their homework along with other activities and adequate sleep. In the upper school, students will often have the opportunity of taking a study hall, thus reducing the amount of time at home that must be devoted to homework.

For poor or uncompleted work, teachers may require students to redo an assignment. At the discretion of the teacher, the 'redo assignment' may be addressed with a differing grade scale. Students are expected to complete all their homework.

Academic Prevention and Intervention

To prevent students from falling behind in their learning and to support those students who are behind in learning, ACAR uses methods inherent in the principles of classical education, the curricular resources of each grade and class, and the principles and requirements of Tennessee’s approach to RTI² as presented by the Tennessee Department of Education in the support of students.

Academic Assessment

The School administers assessments to determine the progress of students and to assist in attaining student performance objectives and educational achievement goals of the School. The School administers “achievement tests” and diagnostic assessments.

“Achievement tests” for purposes of this Policy are defined as assessments aligned with the Tennessee academic content standards and curriculum standards and designed to measure a student’s level of skill in a specific subject area (ELA, math, science, social studies). These assessments are usually administered at the end of a designated grade and/or are required as part of Tennessee graduation requirements.

“Diagnostic assessments” for purposes of this Policy are defined as those aligned with Tennessee academic content standards and model curriculum, designed to measure student comprehension of academic content and mastery of related skills for a relevant subject area at each grade level.

The School administers State-mandated tests at the times designated by the Tennessee Department of Education.

In addition to achievement tests and diagnostic assessments, staff members will assess the academic achievement and learning needs of each student. Procedures for such assessments may include, but are not limited to, teacher observation techniques, cumulative student records, and/or student performance data collected through standard testing programs.

Any student receiving special education services may be excused from taking any particular test required if the individualized education program (“IEP”) developed for the student excuses the student from taking that test and instead specifies that an alternative assessment method be used.

The School shall not use any student’s failure to attain a specified score on any State-mandated test as a factor in any decision to deny the student promotion to a higher-grade level, except as provided by law.

Intervention Services

In accordance with this Policy, the School shall provide prevention/intervention services in pertinent subject areas to students who score below the proficient level on a reading, writing, mathematics, social studies or science achievement test and/or who do not demonstrate academic performance at their grade level based on the results of a diagnostic assessment. Intervention services will be commensurate with the student’s test performance in each such test

area including prevention, intervention, or remediation. Such prevention, intervention or remediation programs may include, but are not limited to, remedial program content, one-on-one teacher/student interaction, computer-assisted remedial course material, student-specific tutoring intervention and/or small group interaction.

Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring semesters. Arrangements for additional conferences may be made with your child's teacher before or after school hours.

Academic Textbooks and Supplies

Students will receive a variety of books and materials. All textbooks should be returned to the school at the end of the year. Other books, mainly literature and workbooks, will be checked out to the individual student. These become the property of the child (meaning that our students will be building their own collection of the classics!).

Materials that are loaned or given to students are to be treated appropriately. Students are responsible for these materials. If materials given or loaned to a student are lost or damaged, the student must pay for any needed replacement.

In the case that reimbursement has not been made to American Classical Academy Rutherford for lost or damaged materials, no further materials will be issued to that student until the past due fees are paid.

Reporting

For students to be successful, both they and their parents should be informed of their standing in class. In addition to the regular grading of assignments, the following means will be employed to inform parents of their student's academic progress:

- Soon after the beginning of the year, teachers will send home an initial evaluation of students' progress.
- If a student is significantly below grade level, a meeting will be scheduled with a parent, the teacher, and other faculty as deemed appropriate.
- Interdisciplinary Reports: These reports are sent home half-way through each quarter to students with a C minus grade or lower in any subject.
- Once a semester (after the first and third quarters), parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled to discuss the students' academic progress. Parents will receive report cards at the conference.
- Semester report cards will be mailed home.
- Grades will be posted within 7 business days after the due date unless otherwise notified by the teacher on the syllabus.
- Final report cards will be mailed approximately two weeks after the end of the school year.

Schedule Changes

There will be no class schedule changes during the semester unless it is deemed in the best interest of the student by the school as determined by the Head of School.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. The entire system of assessment rests on the assumption that the work a student turns in is the student's own work. Plagiarism compromises this system, is unfair to other students in the class who do their own work, and it constitutes a form of theft of others' ideas and labor. Plagiarism is defined as *the appropriation of another's ideas or words in order to present them as one's own*. An instance of plagiarism can be as long as a term paper or as short as a sentence. Simply rephrasing an author's words can also constitute plagiarism. The words of authors can only be used when properly quoted and cited. Teachers will provide the guidelines of acceptable citation. When in doubt, the student has the responsibility to ask how a citation should be used in an assignment.

Whenever a student has been caught plagiarizing, the following disciplinary process will be followed.

- The teacher will keep a copy of the student's assignment and, whenever possible, a copy of the plagiarized work.
- The teacher will discuss the matter with the student.
- The teacher will inform the Head of School of the plagiarism.
- A disciplinary referral will be issued.
- Either the teacher or an administrator will inform the student's parent of the plagiarism.
- The student will receive an F on the assignment if it is the first offense.
- For a second offense, the student will fail the entire course, and further disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, may be instituted.
- Instances of plagiarism may be placed in the student's permanent record.

Cheating

Like plagiarism, cheating will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Cheating occurs when a student uses someone else's work or a prohibited source of information in order to gain an unfair advantage on a test or an assignment and to avoid doing his own work. Cheating comes in many forms. One student copying off another, a student using a "cheat sheet" to answer questions on a test, and a student trying to pass off another student's work as his own are examples of cheating. The same disciplinary process outlined for plagiarism will be followed for instances of cheating. A student who allows others to copy his work will also be held accountable in the same fashion. A disciplinary referral will be issued if cheating has occurred.

Teaching Controversial Issues

Controversial issues are defined as contemporary problems, subjects, or questions of a political, religious, or social nature where there are entrenched differences of opinion and passions run high. Controversial issues will be explored only when emanating from some part of the

curriculum in grades 7 through 12 (Upper School). When these subjects come up, teachers will present an impartial view of various sides of the issue without proselytizing. Contemporary controversial issues will not be discussed in grades K through 6 (Lower School), even if part of the Core Knowledge sequence, without Head of School approval. Parents will have the choice of having their children opt out of this portion of the class. No part of the curriculum will be used to undermine the nobility of America's experiment in liberty and self-government under the rule of law.

Teaching Evolution

American Classical Academy Rutherford embraces a rigorous program in the natural sciences. In biology, the school will teach the theory of evolution as found in the standard high-school biology textbooks and as also taught at the college level in both secular and religious colleges. The theory of evolution is largely misunderstood today by the general public. Much of what constitutes the teaching of evolution concerns adaptation of species to their environment and change over time. A great many of these phenomena are observable. A very small percentage of evolutionary theory deals with the more controversial issue of the origins of life and, in particular, human life. This latter aspect of evolution, to the extent it is taught, will be introduced to students briefly with a great deal of circumspection; it is not a central part of the theory. Furthermore, the study of science will be confined to the investigation of the physical world. It is not the place of science to make metaphysical claims nor to confirm or deny the validity of religion or the existence of God. ACAR recognizes a clear distinction between *science* and *scientism*. Science is research into the natural world in order to find the most plausible explanations for natural phenomena. Scientism is the belief—and it is a belief—that science is the *only* means of understanding our world, thus excluding other ways of interpreting the world, such as through literature, philosophy, or religion. Keeping in mind this distinction, the teachers at ACAR will leave matters of faith up to students and their parents. The role of a teacher in a public school is neither that of preacher nor of skeptic. Rather teachers of history, when called upon by the curriculum, will teach the history of religion without either advocating or undermining religion in general or any specific faith. Likewise, science teachers will teach science, without comment on religion. Teachers, students, and parents must realize that a biology class has a particular purpose and is not the proper venue for a philosophical or theological discussion on the existence of God or claims relating to the activity of God or absence thereof in the natural world.

Role of Parents and School in Relation to Human Sexuality

We believe parents have the fundamental responsibility for their children's education, which includes the areas of morality and sexuality. The school's role should be viewed as a supportive one. It is apparent that sexuality is more than biology and physiology. It also encompasses morality, spirituality, and the emotions. Because it is a part of the whole human experience, it must be taught with circumspection and sensitivity.

We believe children are naturally modest concerning their bodies and are not ready to learn everything at once. They are naturally curious, however, and need to get answers to their questions in a way appropriate to their stage of development. In teaching this topic, we want to minimize the embarrassment associated with it for both children and parents.

Teaching Human Sexuality

We will teach the Core Knowledge Sequence in the fifth grade, which includes a discussion on the reproductive organs, reproduction, and the menstrual cycle. The class will be taught in a gender-separated environment. Parents will have the opportunity to preview the materials the class will be reading, on which the discussion is based. Parents will also have the opportunity to attend a meeting with the teacher(s) prior to the section on sexuality. Sexual intercourse will only be discussed in the context of a monogamous relationship between two people of opposite sexes. Depending on the general maturity level of the 5th grade boys, ACAR may decide that this curriculum is too much information and less necessary for boys at this stage of development and therefore delay these lessons for a later time.

Parents will have the choice of having their children opt out of this portion of the class, which will be taught during the regular science time.

Later, in high school, themes that deal with sexuality may emerge from the reading of serious texts, such as *Anna Karenina* or *Brave New World* or *The Scarlet Letter*. When these topics do emerge from the curriculum itself, teachers will engage the material in a serious way.

In the higher grades, students may be involved in discussions concerning sexuality and sexual restraint as these issues affect their living a moral and responsible life. Such discussions will always be led by the Administration or a faculty member who has the full confidence of the Head of School in these matters. Moreover, parents will always be notified of these discussions before they take place in case parents wish their children to opt out. In addition, as mandated by the state, sex education will be taught in the high school in the context of human health. Sex education via the health class will be taught in a gender-separated environment.

Character education is an integral facet of our program. Sexuality involves serious moral decision-making. It is important to help children build the capacity to make and abide by sound moral choices. We would like our teaching of human reproduction to be a springboard to initiate and facilitate discussions between parents and children on this sensitive subject.

Employees will not discuss their personal lives on such matters with students.

Video Viewing Policy

From time to time, videos or other media may be used to support the lesson. To be used in class they must meet a specific curricular objective and will not have profane language or sexually explicit material. Teachers must receive prior approval from the Head of School to show a video. Teachers are responsible for previewing videos to ensure that they are appropriate.

School Life & Environment

Honor Code

American Classical Academy Rutherford was founded to develop students in both mind and character. The School's core virtues are the guiding principles used to cultivate and nurture character: courage, moderation, justice, responsibility, friendship, prudence, and wisdom. The core virtues are derived from and depend on the classical cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude. Students are expected to conduct themselves honorably in word and deed, to strive to live by the virtues, and to encourage others to do so as well.

The American Classical Academy Rutherford Honor Code is as follows:

An American Classical Academy Rutherford student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. An American Classical Academy Rutherford student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, responsibility, friendship, and wisdom.

Attendance

The school day for all students begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m.

Regular attendance is important to ensure achievement in school. We discourage vacations and trips taken during the school year. We also discourage doctors' and other appointments when avoidable. When those appointments are unavoidable, students are responsible for any make-up work during their absence. Assignments that are not made up, according to the time restrictions set by the teacher and school, will be reflected in their grades. It is helpful to both student and teacher to make prior arrangements to meet that requirement.

ACAR does provide a Before-School Drop-Off and After-School Pick-Up Program. Information about this program may be obtained in the Main Office.

Students enrolled in ACAR must attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State. The educational program offered by ACAR is predicated upon the presence and punctuality of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. A parent must contact the school whenever a student is absent.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled at ACAR during the days and hours that the school is in session. Attendance need not always be within the school facilities, but a student will be considered to be in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board.

Tardiness

Students who arrive after the beginning of the school day will be considered tardy. Students must make it not only to the school but to class on time to avoid being tardy. Students who are either tardy or returning to school from an appointment must be signed in at the front desk by a parent or guardian. The student will be issued a tardy slip or a returning slip, and the student

will be required to deliver this slip to their teacher when they enter the classroom. In grades 7-12, tardy students may be held out of class for the period affected to keep from disrupting the class. Repeated tardiness may affect a student's "seat time" and therefore his eligibility for promotion. Tardiness may be considered an unexcused absence for that class.

Repeated tardiness shall be grounds for disciplinary action. If a student misses more than half a class, the student will be marked absent for the class. After four (4) unexcused tardies, and each unexcused tardy thereafter, a student will be issued an extended day or Saturday Enrichment, and the School shall notify the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of the child's unexcused tardies in writing and request a parent conference.

Absences (Excused/Unexcused)

Absences due to the following will be excused:

1. Personal illness/injury
2. Illness of immediate family member
3. Death in the family
4. Extreme weather conditions
5. Religious observances
6. Pregnancy
7. School-endorsed activities
8. Summons, subpoena, or court order
9. Circumstances in the judgment of the Head of School create emergencies over which the student has no control

Upon return to ACAR, the student must provide to the school, a written statement or phone call from a parent (or medical authority), of the cause for absence, or the absence will be considered unexcused. The Head of School or his/her designee reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence.

For these excused absences, students will have one day for every day absent after coming back to school to make up the work missed. The school will require suitable proof of excused absences, including written statements from medical sources. All other absences will be considered unexcused absences. Students may receive partial credit for academic work missed during absences.

Students who have accumulated 5 unexcused absences or 5 tardies at anytime throughout the school year may not be permitted to:

- Participate in school field trips;
- Attend school dances;
- Receive student-of-the-quarter or honor or high honor roll awards;
- Serve on student government;
- Participate in extracurricular activities and programs; or
- Participate in school sports.

Guidelines for Student Behavior

Student self-government and a sense of purpose develop from application and accomplishment, from consistent expectations in the school climate and culture, and from the habitual practice of the virtues.

The aim of American Classical Academy Rutherford is to teach students. “Student” derives from the Latin word *studēre*, which means “to give attention to,” “to take pains with,” “to apply oneself to,” “to strive after,” “to pursue,” “to desire.” Students, then, should be diligent in, attached to, and zealous for their studies. Simply put, we expect students to live up to their name. The teachers of American Classical Academy Rutherford work hard to prepare their lessons. These lessons are designed to teach students nothing less than who they are, what they offer the world, and what the world offers them. Students must, in turn, take fullest advantage of these lessons and make the best use of this time of their lives given to preparing their minds for the opportunities and challenges that await them. All policies regarding student conduct and discipline flow from this general principle: students must fully engage themselves in the education American Classical Academy Rutherford offers them.

Therefore, students will:

- Be polite and attentive both in and outside of class.
- Attend school consistently, be punctual, and take responsibility for making up any work promptly when absent.
- Be prepared for class and follow directions.
- Follow all reasonable requests made by adults on the premises with a positive attitude, and show respect for self, others, and property.
- Cooperate with and demonstrate respect for the faculty and staff, including administrators, teachers, secretaries, custodians, and any other people working at the school.
- Communicate in an acceptable tone of voice using an acceptable choice of words.
- Follow lunchroom, playground, field-trip, lab, and individual classroom rules.
- Follow school rules when participating in school-related events.
- Adhere to the uniform policy.
- Not use threats or intimidation against any other person.
- Respect the health and safety of others, safety rules, and not bring tobacco, alcohol, or any illegal substances to school.
- Be dismissed by the teacher, not the bell or the clock.
- Not leave the school premises without signing out in the main office.
- Not bring anything to school that could be used to harm another or that is illegal.
- Follow the ACAR Electronics Policy outlined in this handbook.

School employees (usually administrators) may conduct searches of property or persons when they have reason to suspect that the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff may be endangered.

American Classical Academy Rutherford is not responsible for loss, theft, or breakage of items brought to school. Fines will be levied on parents for vandalism or theft committed by their students. Fines will also be levied for lost or damaged school property. Students may also be required to be involved in the maintenance or repair of damaged property.

Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy

The School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (including cyber-bullying) of any student on school property or at school-sponsored events. A safe and civil environment in the School is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation and bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, are conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the School's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate bullying.

ACAR values the free exchange of ideas. Classroom discussion of ideas and opinions, including controversial subject matter, shall not be construed as harassment.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any deliberate or intentional gesture, or any deliberate or intentional written, verbal, or physical act or threat that a student has exhibited toward another Student or Staff member and the behavior both: (1) has one or more of the following effects: (a) harming a Student or Staff member; (b) damaging a Student's or Staff member's property; (c) placing a Student or Staff member in reasonable fear of harm to the Student's or Staff member's person; (d) placing a Student or Staff member in reasonable fear of damage to the Student's or Staff member's property; and (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a Student or Staff member.

The School prohibits acts of cyber-bullying, which is a subset of bullying and involves the use of information and communication technologies, including but not limited to email, cell phone and pager text messages, blogs, MySpace, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Wikipedia, Bebo, the Internet, Xanga, Piczo, instant messaging, defamatory personal Websites, and defamatory online personal polling Websites, to support deliberate or repeated, or hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm, intimidate or harass others on School time or the School premises, at School events, programs or activities or off School time or School premises if such acts affect other Students or Staff of the School.

The School reserves the right to discipline students' off campus behavior which substantially disrupts the School's educational process or mission or threatens the safety or well-being of a Student or Staff member. Some factors which may be considered in determining whether the behavior warrants discipline include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) whether behavior created material and substantial disruption to the educational process or School's mission due to the stress on the individual(s) victimized or the time invested by Staff in dealing with the behavior or its consequences; (2) whether a nexus to on-campus activities exists; (3) whether the behavior creates a substantial interference with a Student's or Staff member's security or right to educate and receive education; (4) whether the behavior invades the privacy of others;

or (5) whether any threat is deemed to be a true threat by the administration or Board, using factors and guidelines set out by the courts or by common sense, reasonable person standards.

Some acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying and cyberbullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying that they require a response either at the classroom, School building or by law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

All School employees, volunteers and students are required to report prohibited incidents of which they are aware to the Head of School or his/her designee. The Head of School or his/her designee is then responsible for determining whether an alleged incident constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the Head of School or his/her designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the reported incident, and prepare a report documenting the prohibited incident that is reported. Once an investigation is completed, and the reported incident has been substantiated, the parent or guardian of any student involved in the prohibited incident shall be notified and to the extent permitted law have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident. The School will maintain, via the education management information system, information regarding the number of incidents of harassment of Students against other Students, in each building and School-wide, that violates this policy. All School employees, volunteers and Students shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy.

The School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any victim or person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Head of School or his/her designee after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with School policies and procedures. Nothing in this policy prohibits a victim from seeking redress under any provision of Tennessee law that may apply.

The School may form a prevention task force and/ or programs to educate students about this policy, such as holding an assembly on harassment, intimidation and bullying for Parents and Students, to raise the level of awareness and help prevent the prohibited conduct. The School may also provide training, workshops, or courses on this policy to school employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students.

Discipline

The main purpose of all discipline is to foster a student's desire to be morally and intellectually virtuous. Where that desire does not exist, self-discipline will not arise and a student will falter when laws and rules are silent.

The secondary purpose is to foster an orderly and disciplined environment in which all students can learn and present their ideas in a prudent way.

Any departure from proper decorum is liable to disciplinary action. Because not all students respond to the same arguments, incentives, or punishments, any discipline policy must be at once equal to all students and consistently applied, and also fitted to both the nature of each individual student and the circumstances in which any misbehavior occurs. Students are expected to adhere to the school's high expectations for behavior and core virtues lest they compromise their own learning and interfere with the learning of others.

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action ranges from verbal warnings to suspension and expulsion, and will be used to promote both a student's self-discipline and an orderly environment for all. Even when more serious discipline like a suspension is necessary, the purpose is not to punish but to educate.

Minor infractions (i.e. uniform violation, refusal to follow instructions, being unprepared for class, incomplete homework) or disruptions will largely be handled in the classroom in a way suitable to the age of the student. Whenever a student misbehaves repeatedly or flagrantly, the consequences for the infraction will be immediate, relevant, and effectual. Rather than allow misbehavior to fester in the classroom, teachers will send disruptive students to the office, normally to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee.

The two primary tools for addressing disruptive or wrongful behavior are detention and Discipline Referrals. *Detentions* are generally used for more basic infractions, while *Discipline Referrals* are used for more serious violations.

Detention

Students may receive detention for minor infractions, and detentions may be given by teachers or administrators. Detention will occur before or after school, during lunch, on the weekend, or at another time determined by the Head of School. Weekend detentions require students to be dressed in their uniform. Detention takes precedence over any extracurricular activity. Students who miss detention will need to make it up and serve another detention. Repeatedly missing detention may result in suspension.

Detentions are cumulative throughout the school year. Listed below are the first three detention infractions and consequences. More than three infractions may result in the student receiving a Discipline Referral.

First Infraction: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee . The student will be given a detention form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator.

Second Infraction: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the infraction. The student will be given a detention form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator.

Third Infraction: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the infraction. Parent must return with student for mandatory Parent Conference.

Discipline Referrals

For consistent and/or more serious disruptions, the student will be sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee and receive a Discipline Referral. They may be issued by teachers, staff, or administrators, and they will accumulate over the course of the year. A student's total will not reset at the semester, but it will reset at the end of the year. Receiving a Discipline Referral indicates that a student's behavior is a serious problem. Earning repeated Discipline Referrals will result in more serious consequences each time. A parent or guardian must sign the Discipline Referral form and the student should return the form to the administrator. It is our hope that the consequences for receiving a Discipline Referral will encourage students to display good character and act in accordance with the school's mission.

First Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. The student will be given a Discipline Referral form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator. Student may receive a detention and/or be suspended.

Second Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. The student will be given a Discipline Referral form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator. Student may receive a detention and/or be suspended.

Third Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. Student will be sent home for the remainder of the day and must return with parent upon return to school. Parent may be asked to attend class with student for a part or the entire day of return. Student may be suspended.

Fourth Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. Student will be sent home for the remainder of the day and must return with parent upon return to school. Upon return to school, student and parent will be given a behavioral contract to review and sign. Students will not be allowed to attend school-related events. Student may be suspended.

Fifth Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. Student will be sent home for the remainder of the day and must return with parent upon return to school. Upon return to school, the potential expulsion process may be discussed and/or implemented. Student may be suspended or considered for expulsion.

Parents who attend school with their student due to a referral will be seated in or near the classroom (location assigned by the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee). Cell phones and/or electronic devices are **strictly prohibited** while in the presence of students.

At no time will a student's disciplinary record be discussed with another student or parent. However, other students or parents may be consulted regarding an incident in order to discern the truth.

Suspension & Expulsion

The School may suspend a student for up to ten (10) days or may expel a student. In the event that the School decides to suspend or expel a student, the student will be given a notice which states the intent to suspend or expel and the reason(s) for the suspension or expulsion. Immediate attempts will be made to contact a parent or guardian by phone. The student may meet informally with the Head of School to challenge the suspension or expulsion. After the meeting, or if the student declines the meeting, suspension or expulsion may be invoked immediately. A copy of the notice of intent to suspend or expel will be mailed to the parent or guardian within one (1) school day after the time of a student's expulsion or suspension. A formal hearing will be scheduled not earlier than three nor later than five school days after the notice to expel is given.

In the event that, in the opinion of the Principal or his/ her designee, a student's presence at the School creates a health risk, presents a danger to other persons or property or seriously disrupts the functions of the School, the student may be removed from the premises without formal suspension or expulsion procedures with notice and procedures to follow the removal.

A student shall be expelled for one (1) year for bringing a firearm to the School or onto School Property (any Property owned, used or leased by the School for School, School extracurricular or School-related events). A student may be expelled for a period not to exceed one (1) year for:

1. Bringing a firearm to an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other School program or activity that is located at a School or on School Property;
2. Bringing a knife to the School, onto School Property or to an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event or any other program or activity sponsored by the School or which the School is a participant;
3. Possessing a firearm or knife at School, on School Property, or at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other School program or activity which firearm or knife was initially brought onto School Property by another person;
4. Committing an act that is a criminal offense when committed by an adult that results in serious physical harm to persons or serious physical harm to property;
5. Making a bomb threat to a School building or to any premises at which a School activity is occurring at the time of the threat.

A firearm is defined as any weapon, including a starter gun, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any firearm muffler or silencer, or any destructive device. A destructive

device, includes but is not limited to, any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four (4) ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one quarter ounce, mine, or other similar device.

A knife is defined as any cutting instrument consisting of at least one sharp blade.

The specific circumstances under which the Head of School may modify a one (1) year expulsion could include:

1. A recommendation from the group of persons knowledgeable of the student's educational needs;
2. The student was unaware that s/he was possessing a firearm or knife;
3. The student did not understand that the item s/he possessed was considered a firearm or knife;
4. The student brought the item to School as part of an educational activity and did not realize it would be considered a firearm or knife; and
5. The student may be eligible for participation in an alternative program.

A student may be expelled for up to eighty (80) days for serious misconduct or rules violations, or for other just cause. During the period of suspension, removal, or expulsion the student may not attend or participate in any School functions without permission from the Head of School. The student may enter School facilities only when given permission by the Head of School or if accompanied by a parent or guardian who accepts responsibility for the student's actions and/or behavior at the facility.

The Board also authorizes the Head of School to suspend a student from any or all co-curricular or extracurricular activities for misconduct or rules violations. The length of suspension shall be determined by the Head of School commensurate with the seriousness of the student's misconduct or rules violations in accordance with the discipline code.

If the Head of School determines that a student's behavior on a School vehicle violates School rules, the Head of School may suspend the student from School bus riding privileges for the length of time deemed appropriate for the violation and remediation of the behavior.

The Board authorizes the Head of School to provide for options to suspension of a student from the School which shall include a program whereby a student performs community service either in lieu of or as a part of a suspension or an expulsion.

Students who have been assigned suspensions and expulsions are permitted to make up work as follows:

1. Receive at least partial credit for a completed assignment (as determined by the Head of School);
2. Grade reductions may result based on the student's suspension/assignments;
3. Students are prohibited from receiving a failing grade on a completed assignment solely on account of the student's suspension.

The Board designates the Head of School or his/her designee as its representative at all hearings regarding the appeal of a suspension.

The Head of School shall be responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring compliance with applicable laws.

A copy of this Policy is to be posted in common areas of the School and made available to students and parents upon request.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices must not be used during the school day or immediately before and after school. This includes but is not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, handheld video games, smart watches, Fitbits, and cell phones. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices and at the Head of School's discretion.

Students may not use cell phones during school hours. Before 7:30 a.m. and after 3:30 p.m., students may only use cell phones outside the building. If a student must bring a cell phone to school, he or she must keep it in a locker for the entire day including during recess, lunch, passing periods, and study halls. Students may not carry cell phones in their pockets or backpacks. Students may not use cell phones inside during drop off or dismissal time.

Students may not contact their parents via text message during the school day. The Main Office has phones available for students who need to call home.

Any student who is using a phone or other electronic device during the day will have that device confiscated. If there is reason to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the device may be powered on and searched.

Students who break this rule will be subject to disciplinary action. Once a device has been confiscated, the following procedure will be used to return the device:

1st Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the student or parent when school is dismissed. Parent will be contacted.

2nd Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the parent when school is dismissed. Parent will be contacted.

3rd Confiscation: The device will be held for three days and can be picked up by the parent after that time. Parent will be contacted.

Confiscations beyond three may result in additional disciplinary action, including possible suspension. American Classical Academy Rutherford is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of electronic devices left on campus.

Uniforms & Grooming

At American Classical Academy Rutherford, students wear uniforms to eliminate distractions, to demonstrate respect for others and ourselves, and to remind ourselves that we are doing important work and participating in significant learning.

Students must be in uniform to attend class. Students not in uniform will be sent to the office and must call a parent or guardian. Parents will either bring acceptable attire, or students will be sent home. These absences are not excused.

The uniform and dress code policy is that students will dress according to the mandatory and optional items listed on the school-approved uniform guidelines for boys and girls, respectively, posted on the school website, plus the following series of directives:

- Students may wear their own outerwear (coats, sweaters, vests) to school and on the playground. If they are cold in the classroom, they should wear one of the long sleeve uniform items.
- All shirts must be tucked in.
- Skirts shall fall no higher than 2 inches above the knee as measured when the student is standing.
- All uniform pieces that can be removed (e.g., sweaters, vests) should be labeled with student's first initial and last name.
- Students may use any backpack if it is clean and tasteful.
- Hair accessories must be modest and match the uniform colors.
- All girls' and boys' polo shirts may have the top button unbuttoned. All other buttons must be buttoned.
- Modest jewelry is allowed. An object that has a purpose other than jewelry cannot be worn as jewelry (i.e. chains or collars).
- Tattoos must be covered at all times.
- No hats, visors, bandanas, or sunglasses are permitted (religious headgear is authorized).
- Non-marking tennis shoes are required for physical education class and/or sports in the gym. K-5th grade students will not change out for gym classes. 6-12th grade students will dress according to the approved uniform posted on the school website.
- Laced shoes must be tied at all times.
- Good personal hygiene is expected. This includes wearing neat, clean clothing. Strong/offensive body odors or excessive use of perfumes or cologne are inappropriate.

Expectations for Parents

We believe parents own the fundamental responsibility for their children's education and that the school's role should be viewed as a supportive one. The school expects parents to:

- Model good character and insist that their children cultivate good habits and virtues;
- Help their children develop effective study skills;
- Read to their children, especially those in the early grades;
- Oversee regular reading and writing and mathematics skill development;
- Stimulate discussion and exploration of ideas and events with students; and
- Support the school goals through familiarity with this handbook and parts of the website devoted to the mission and philosophy of the school, homework review, getting children to school on time, and holding high expectations and aspirations that contribute positively to the student's success.

Parent Communications with the Administration, Faculty, & Staff

American Classical Academy Rutherford values the conversation that takes place between parents and teachers about the education of children. Nonetheless, this conversation must follow certain guidelines in order to be fruitful and to allow teachers to devote themselves to their classes during the day. Parents may use any of the following ways to contact or communicate with the Administration (Head of School and Assistant Head of School), Faculty, and Staff of American Classical Academy Rutherford:

- Scheduled face-to-face meeting
- Scheduled phone call
- Message (with the main office)
- Voice Mail
- Email

American Classical Academy Rutherford employees will not use social media to communicate with parents or students.

ACAR teachers and administrators will respond to parents as quickly as possible. In general, parents should expect to hear from a teacher or from the administration within twenty-four hours of contacting the school, barring weekends and holidays. While a teacher's schedule may not permit an actual meeting within that time, the teacher will attempt to make contact in some way.

Visitor Policy

American Classical Academy Rutherford welcomes parents and other visitors to visit our campus. All visitors should check in with the main office upon arrival and departure. Any guests who are not parents must be escorted by a parent or arranged with the main office in advance.

Beginning at 8:00 a.m., the campus will be closed. All visitors to the campus must stop by the main office to check in and obtain a visitor's badge. Classrooms, the lunchroom, and the recess areas are closed to parents during the school day except for school volunteers or parents who have scheduled a formal observation.

During the school day, it may be necessary for a parent to drop off lunch or a forgotten item. Parents making deliveries should drop off the item in the main office. One of the office staff members will be happy to deliver the item to the student.

When teachers arrive in the morning, they have certain preparations that must be completed before receiving students. After school, teachers have lesson plans to wrap up, tutoring to provide, papers to grade, calls to return, and other business to conduct. All of our teachers welcome parent/teacher conferences as long as they are scheduled in advance and on their calendar. To schedule a meeting with a teacher, please contact him or her via email, voice mail, or by leaving a message in the main office.

Volunteers at ACAR

We deeply appreciate the help provided by many people not on the ACAR staff in many volunteer capacities!

Any volunteer that will regularly have unsupervised access to students must clear a criminal background check. Additionally, the Head of School may require volunteers to complete training before serving students on the ACAR campus. The Administration will maintain accurate records of currently approved volunteers.

Volunteers may inadvertently have access to sensitive information. Any information about students, grades, faculty, etc. is to remain confidential. Volunteers may observe situations of a sensitive nature. These are also to remain confidential. If a volunteer has a concern involving something that is witnessed, observed, or overheard, he or she should address the concern with a faculty member, Assistant Head of School, Head of School, or a member of the Board--in that order. If a volunteer disregards this policy, the privilege of volunteering may be revoked. Any grievance or concern a volunteer has with a classroom or a teacher will be handled by the procedures defined in this Handbook. Under no circumstance is it ever acceptable for a volunteer to confront a teacher about an issue when students are present.

Special Events & Parties

Special events held during the school day must be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum. Any special event must be approved by the Head of School a minimum of 2 weeks prior to its planning. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

Lunch

For information on lunch and school nutrition, please see the School website.

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers presenting during the school day must speak on topics covered in the course or grade. If possible, the students should be studying the given topic at the time of the presentation.

Guest speakers must be approved by the Head of School prior to the invitation being extended. Approval must still be obtained for guest speakers used in the previous school year. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

Guest speakers who cover controversial topics must be screened by the Head of School. The screening may include an interview of the guest by the Head of School or designee. Parents must be notified prior to guest speaker presentations on controversial issues, including religions covered in the Core Knowledge sequence. Parents may have students excused from such presentations, in which case the student will be supervised in a silent study hall. Teachers will provide permission slips to parents as notification of a guest speaker covering controversial issues and indicate an option on the permission slip for student to be excused.

Field Trips

Field trips should be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum. Field trips must be approved by the Head of School a minimum of two weeks prior to planned execution.

Eligibility for Sports & Extracurricular Activities

Students are ineligible for extracurricular activities if they have two D's or one F in any subject(s). Academic eligibility will be determined with quarter ending grades. Ineligible students will remain ineligible for the remainder of the following quarter. Two disciplinary referrals in one quarter or three in one semester will render a student ineligible for any extracurricular activities for the remainder of the semester. Four disciplinary referrals will render a student ineligible for all extracurricular activities and functions for the remainder of the school year. The Head of School or Assistant Head of School may deem a student ineligible for the following season or for off-campus field trips based on repeated misconduct.

Student Fees & Supplies

From time to time, the school may charge fees to its families to fund expenses related to transportation, classroom supplies, art, elective courses, activities, field trips, etc. All charges and fees must be authorized by the Head of School. All financial obligations must be rectified prior to registration for the upcoming school year. Students with outstanding balances will not be issued report cards or be permitted to register for the next school year.

While these fees have been approved by the Head of School and are requested to help provide all students a great classical education, Tennessee law prohibits requiring the payment of any fees

“as a condition of attending the public school or using its equipment while receiving educational training” T.C.A. § 49-2-110(c). This includes fees for activities and supplies to participate in any course offered for credit or grade and fees for graduation ceremonies. We appreciate your support of the education of all students at the School and note that the fees you decide to pay are a gift rather than a required payment. We thank you for partnering with us in providing a strong classical education.

Off-Site Extracurricular Activities

The logistics of all of American Classical Academy Rutherford’s off-site extra-curricular activities must be approved by the Head of School. All adults helping with these activities must be registered American Classical Academy Rutherford volunteers.

Chaperone Policy

American Classical Academy Rutherford will conduct field trips and off-site events and in so doing will welcome and enlist the aid of parent chaperones. The number of chaperones for a field trip or off- site extracurricular event will be established prior to the occurrence of the event. This number will be strictly adhered to. Fees for the event must also be paid by the chaperone and are due at the same time as the student’s fee for the event. If fees are not submitted by the date due another chaperone will be chosen to fill the vacancy. Chaperones must attend to assigned duties and must model the American Classical Academy Rutherford core virtues. Violators of this policy will not be allowed to chaperone any future events.

Lost and Found

The school will keep a Lost and Found. Periodically, if items have not been claimed for an unreasonable amount of time, the school will donate items that remain in the Lost and Found.

Bus Policy

American Classical Academy Rutherford does not provide a bus for transportation to or from the school.

Student Publications Policy

Student publications must uphold American Classical Academy Rutherford’s mission, philosophy, core virtues, and policies. The purpose of such publications is to inform the American Classical Academy Rutherford community of school-related events, achievements, and business. In addition, student publications are a way for students to learn and to practice responsible writing and journalism. Student editorials are permitted subject to prior review by the Head of School. Employees of the school or parents may not use student media to proselytize their own views on controversial issues. The Head of School acts as the final editor in all cases.

Lockers

American Classical Academy Rutherford provides lockers for students in Grades 7 to 12. The lockers and locks are school property. Students will be issued a lock and a combination. Students who misplace their lock will be required to pay \$5 for its replacement. Only locks issued by the school are authorized.

American Classical Academy Rutherford has the authority to search lockers when deemed reasonable, even if it requires removal of the lock.

American Classical Academy Rutherford is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Valuables such as tablets or video games are NOT to be brought to school.

Students must observe the following rules:

- Students are not allowed to decorate the inside of lockers with posters, pictures, or anything else which presents sex, drugs, suicide, cults, alcohol, or promotes other negative or derogatory messages as determined by the Administration.
- Lockers must be kept neat and orderly at all times. Locker checks will occur each semester.
- Lockers must be kept closed when not in use to maintain the integrity of the fire corridors and avoid careless accidents. Items left outside lockers or on the floor may be removed or disposed of.
- We strongly discourage students from sharing their locker combinations with others, as that may lead to conflicts should items go missing.
- Problems with lockers should be reported to an administrator.

Health, Records, Medicine, & the School Nurse

Administration of Medication

American Classical Academy Rutherford is committed to the health and safety of its students. Medication and/or medical procedures required by students should be administered by a parent/legal guardian at home. Under exceptional circumstances, prescribed medication and/or medical health-related procedures may be administered by the School Nurse (or designee), or self-administered by the student per written physician's orders and written parent/guardian authorization. Any such administration must comply with applicable law. The parent/guardian must complete and sign the *Administration of Medication/Medical Procedure* form to acknowledge that the school assumes no responsibility for medications or procedures that are self-administered.

Student Medical Records

Student health records will be maintained in locked or password-protected files in order to maintain confidentiality. All health records will be managed by the Assistant Head of School and any appropriate, designated staff (such as the nurse) and will only be released to service providers as allowed and dictated by district and state regulations.

Medical Operations

American Classical Academy Rutherford will:

- Participate in workshops, in-services and/or training offered by the Tennessee Department of Education's Office of Coordinated School Health
- Use appropriate State forms for health services

- Require part-time nurses and volunteers to have completed training in CPR/first aid, diabetic education, medication administration, and AED training, as required.

Sick children should not be in school. Any child who has a fever or is contagious (e.g., with pink eye, strep, the flu) should be kept home.

Parents will be informed when a student reports to the office with a fever or injury. If a parent cannot be reached, school personnel will determine what action needs to be taken. Any child with a fever will not be allowed to remain in the classroom and must be picked up by a parent or designee. If a head injury is sustained, or any injury requiring medical attention, the parent will be asked to come to school and determine what action should be taken. In case of more serious injuries, or in case the parent cannot be contacted, the school will immediately call 911 for emergency assistance.

Parent Obligations

Parents/guardians shall, at all times, ensure that the school has updated medical information on file. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to keep this information updated.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office if a child has been injured at home and may need special considerations at school. Additionally, it is the responsibility of parents to inform the school of any known allergies that their child may have.

Allergies

Parent Responsibilities

Parents and guardians of students with allergies, or students eighteen or older with allergies, shall:

- Promptly notify the Head of School when they become aware that their student has a food allergy and at the beginning of each school year thereafter. The notice shall include a healthcare provider documented allergy and a diet modification order, if necessary;
- Provide the School with prescribed emergency medications;
- Execute a medication authorization form, and/or permission to carry and self-administer epinephrine auto-injector (epi-pen) form;
- Educate their students about allergy management at School. Allergy management education includes, without limitation, identification of "safe foods" and the vigilance required to self-monitor food products available at school functions.

The School, upon receiving proper notification that a student has a food allergy, shall:

- When serving students, make all reasonable efforts to ensure the School's dining hall is nut-free;
- Cooperate with the student and his or her parents or guardians to reduce the likelihood of an allergic reaction at School;
- Maintain any student-provided medication for emergency use;
- Make efforts to inform appropriate School staff and administrators of the student's food allergy and related needs;
- As needed, provide students with flexible seating to accommodate food allergies;

- Encourage any private food vendors who may come to school to screen and label foods served at various School functions; and
- Train selected faculty and staff on the emergency use of epinephrine auto-injectors annually.
- All parent/guardians, students, faculty, and staff are encouraged, but are not required to:
- Carefully read all labels and explain those labels to their child(ren) prior to sending any food product to the School or a School event, e.g., class parties, bake sales, etc.; and,
- When providing food for the class on a special occasion, be sure to make only nut-free options.

Enrollment, Admissions & Residency

Open Enrollment

The ACAR Board and Administration shall permit the enrollment of students who reside in Rutherford County, Tennessee provided that each enrollment is in accordance with the laws of this State, the provisions of this policy, and the administrative guidelines established to implement this policy.

Admissions Procedures

For the 2024-25 School Year, admission to ACAR is open to any student that will be in grades kindergarten through 5th grade. The School will not charge tuition. The School will not discriminate in its pupil admission policies or practices on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, sex, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or any other basis. Upon admission of a student with a disability, the School will comply with all federal and state laws regarding the education of students with disabilities.

Open Enrollment will be held during the spring semester each year; exact dates will be posted online and available in the school office. Families of enrolled students who wish to re-enroll will be required to submit a re-enrollment form for each student prior to or during the open enrollment period in order to secure each seat.

At the end of the Open Enrollment period, the school will admit students in the following order:

1. Current students who have submitted re-enrollment forms.
2. Children of teachers, staff, or board members.
3. Applicants who have siblings already admitted to the school.
4. All other applicants residing within the school district.

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats in any grade, a random lottery process will be used to select admitted students from the pool of applicants. The lottery will also establish the order of the waitlist.

As the School operates and accepts students year round, if other places become available (after the lottery), students are accepted from a prioritized wait list based on the results of the lottery or, if there is no waitlist, then on a first come first serve basis.

If a lottery is necessary, it shall take place at a public location. All parents of children selected in the lottery will be notified of the selection by email. Parents will have up to seven (7) days from receipt of the email to contact the School regarding their decision. If a parent does not respond within seven (7) days of receipt of the email, the school will select another child from the lottery.

Process and Criteria

In order for a student to be admitted the following must be completed/submitted: the registration form and such other enrollment materials that the School deems necessary; copies of the child's original birth certificate or such alternative set forth below in the Records Upon Enrollment section of this policy, current immunization record as mandated by law, proof of residence and parent/ guardian ID. In addition, all custody or court orders pertaining to or allocating parental rights and responsibilities for the care of the student and designating a residential parent and legal custodian of the child shall be provided. Students may also need to complete an academic assessment before being placed in a classroom.

Records Release/Transfer

The School will verify eligibility according to residency and will report names and addresses to the local school district of those students who are enrolled in the School. In addition, once a student is enrolled, records are requested via mail on form letters, signed by a parent or guardian, from the appropriate school of last attendance. Follow-up calls are made to buildings that have not forwarded records as requested. This notice also serves as notice to the student's district of residence as required by law. The Records Release / Transfer includes a request for receipt of any student IEP/ETR/504 Plan that pertains to the student.

Kindergarten Admission

The School can admit to kindergarten any student whose fifth birthday falls on or before August 15 of the current school year.

Residency and Enrollment Requirements

It is necessary to establish a student's residence before they can be enrolled in the School. The residence is the location the parent or student has established as the primary residence and where substantial family activity takes place.

Residence is a place where important family activity takes place during the significant part of each day; a place where the family eats, sleeps, works, relaxes and plays. It must be a place, in short, which can be called "home." One cannot establish a residence merely by purchasing/leasing a house or an apartment or even by furnishing such a house or apartment so that it is suitable for the owner's use. No single factor is determinative; residency will be established by the totality of the circumstances.

Records Upon Enrollment

Upon receipt of completed enrollment forms, a request for records will be made within twenty-four hours from the public or non-public elementary or secondary school the pupil most recently attended. Request for records includes any IEP or 504 Plan that pertains to the student.

No student, at the time of initial entry or at the beginning of each school year shall be permitted to remain in school for more than fourteen days if the student has not met the minimum immunization requirements established by the Tennessee Department of Health or the student presents written evidence satisfactory to the person in charge of admission and acceptable as an exception to such requirement in law.

Enrollment of Expelled Students

Students expelled from another school will be admitted to American Classical Academy Rutherford at the discretion of the Head of School. The Head of School will admit students who are being processed for expulsion and/or suspension on a case-by-case basis. In general, students facing suspension and/or expulsion for discipline problems related to drugs, alcohol, or violent behavior will not be admitted.

Grade Level Placement of Newly Enrolled Students

For students to thrive in school, they must master the fundamentals. The grade level placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by placing students at the most appropriate level for instruction. If students new to the school are found to be reading more than one grade level behind their existing peer group, they may be required to enroll in the grade level deemed appropriate by the Head of School. If the parent insists that the student be placed at a grade level higher than the one recommended, a signed document of this choice will become part of the student's permanent file.

Operations

Emergency Operations Plan

The Administration shall maintain a stand-alone Emergency Operations Plan.

Security Checks

American Classical Academy Rutherford may exercise its right to inspect all backpacks, packages, parcels, and closed containers entering and leaving the premises. School lockers are school property and may be subjected to searches at any time, with or without cause.

Use of School Resources

School resources, such as the resource room and the equipment therein are to be used solely in support of school operations.

Student Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Procedures for student drop-off and pick-up give priority to the safety and security of all students. Parents are expected to cooperate fully to ensure that the process is safe and orderly. A flow of traffic map will be provided to each ACAR family at the beginning of the school year. The school will release students only to parents, legal guardians, or adult designees.

General entry into the school facility will be through Door 1 on the east side of the building. All Regular Drop-off and Pick-up will be at Door 2.

Regular Drop-off Time: 7:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Regular Pick-up Time: 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Prudence is one of ACAR's six core virtues. The adults driving through the carpool line are expected to serve as role models by always exhibiting prudent and thoughtful behavior. Please share these policies and procedures with anyone who will be picking up your student as everyone in the car line is expected to know and follow the procedures.

Please follow these procedures during drop-off and pick-up:

- Once a student is loaded into your vehicle, do not let them exit the vehicle. If your student needs to return to the school building, please park and escort your student back into the building.
- Once you have pulled away from the loading zone, please do not stop your car and promptly proceed to the exit.
- Never exit your vehicle while the engine is running.
- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a vehicle unattended.
- Student drop-offs or pick-ups on Ingram Boulevard are strictly prohibited.

Before-School Drop-off and After-School Pick-Up Programs

For a fee, ACAR offers families of students the Before-School Drop-Off and After-School Pick-up Program. Information regarding the program can be obtained in the Main Office.

Participants in the Before-School Drop-off and After-School Pick-up Program will enter and exit the building through Door 2 on the East side of the building.

Before School Drop-Off Time: 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.

After School Pick-up Time: 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Mass Communication Policy

The Head of School must approve all letters and bulletins, including e-mail (excluding class assignments or bulletins by teachers to their classes) from teachers or parents or other parties to the entire ACAR community.

Information Technology & Security

The school takes precautions to protect your information. When you submit sensitive information via the website, your information is protected both online and offline. Only employees who need the information to perform a specific job are granted access to personally identifiable information. Computers that store personally identifiable information are kept in a secure environment.

Records and Privacy

Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives the request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school Head of School or appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible student may ask the school to amend records that they believe are inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school Head of School or appropriate official, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit

personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400, Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605

Student Records

In order to provide appropriate educational services and programming, the School must collect, retain, and use information about individual students. Simultaneously, the Board recognizes the need to safeguard students' privacy and restrict access to students' personally identifiable information.

Student "personally identifiable information" ("PII") includes, but is not limited to: the student's name; the name of the student's parent or other family members; the address of the student or student's family; a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or information requested by a person who the School reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

In all cases, permitted, narrative information in student records shall be objectively based on the personal observation or knowledge of the originator.

Student records shall be available only to students and their parents, eligible students, designated school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information, or to other individuals or organizations as permitted by law.

The term "parents" includes legal guardians or other persons standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child). The term "eligible student" refers to a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or a student of any age who is enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

Both parents shall have equal access to student records unless stipulated otherwise by court order or law. In the case of eligible students, parents may be allowed access to the records

without the student's consent, provided the student is considered a dependent under section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Student Information Release

Students' names, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of attendance, awards received, and other similar information may be released without parental consent unless the parent notifies the school. In addition, classroom activities and events sponsored by the school are occasionally photographed or videotaped by representatives of the news media for publication in newspapers or broadcast on television. If for any reason you DO NOT wish to have your student(s) photographed or video-taped for these purposes, you must notify the office in writing.

Student names will not be listed with their pictures on the school website or in ACAR advertising publications. The newspaper may list your student's name with a photo only with parent signed consent.

In order for student records and/or transcripts to be released from ACAR, all outstanding fees must be paid in full. These could be from the Before-School Drop-Off or After-School Pick-Off Program or from any other fees that the board has established.

Any additional information not stated above regarding a student will not be given via any avenue of communication without parent permission, unless required by law.

Governance

Board of Directors

American Classical Academy Rutherford (the “School”) is operated by American Classical Education Tennessee, a Tennessee nonprofit corporation recognized as a 501(c)3 organization by the Internal Revenue Service. The corporation is governed by its Board of Directors (the “Board”). The Board operates in accordance with its bylaws and the principles of policy governance. The Board has entered into a Charter Agreement with the Rutherford County Schools Board of Education. The bylaws and Charter Agreement are available on the School’s website, www.rutherfordclassical.org.

Board Responsibilities

The Board is the governing body of the School and is responsible for overseeing the effective, faithful execution of ACAR’s mission.

The founding Board created American Classical Academy Rutherford specifically to implement the following mission:

To train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich Classical Education in the liberal arts and sciences utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtue.

The Board oversees budgeting and spending, community outreach, charter fidelity, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and development to support the program. The Board performs all of its activities to advance ACAR’s mission.

Board Meetings

The Board will post its meeting agendas and minutes on the School website in time for members of the school community and public to attend in person or virtually. Public comment will be permitted at board meetings in accordance with state law. Those wishing to comment will be asked to sign up prior to the meeting.

Communication to the Board

The Board kindly requests that members of the ACAR community refrain from approaching individual Board Directors with concerns or grievances that should be brought to a specific teacher, the Head of School, or the whole Board. Any communication to the Board should follow the Grievance Policy detailed below.

Role of the Head of School

The Head of School will implement a traditional, classical, liberal-arts curriculum. The Head of School makes final decisions on curriculum. The Head of School, while chiefly the academic leader, is also responsible for the discipline, moral culture, operations, and financial priorities of the school.

Internal Communication Procedure

The Board has established an internal communication procedure whereby all authority for the management of the school rests with the Head of School, who has the sole responsibility of reporting to the Board and managing the operations of the School. It is the expectation of the Board that the Head of School will establish an internal communication procedure within the School to assist with its operations.

In all communication with the School, the Board expects the ACAR community to observe the internal communication procedure and direct communication accordingly. The practice of following the internal communication procedure in communications with the school on matters concerning particular students encompasses far more than grievances. It refers to parents' communication of any kind that seeks or requires an action on the part of the school regarding their students. ACAR understands that parents will have questions, opinions, and comments that need to be expressed concerning their children's education. Such communication can be very helpful to the running of the school.

Our preference is that such communication be expressed initially to the teacher or teachers of the child. If further communication is warranted, the parent should consult the appropriate administrator. If further communication is warranted after speaking with the Head of School, then the parent should refer the matter to the Board, as needed.

The Board is not the first point of contact and therefore will refer communications that seek response or action to the appropriate members of the administration.

The reason for this internal communication procedure is that the teacher invariably has the most direct knowledge of the child and can usually do more to remedy or ameliorate a situation than can an administrator or board member. We understand that some parents are "conflict averse" and do not want to bring up a potentially difficult issue with a teacher. Nonetheless, the teachers are eager to help each child in whatever way possible.

Some situations, admittedly, seem by their very nature to warrant a discussion with the Head of School initially. For example, parents may have questions or concerns about the overall homework load or a particular way of teaching, such as the Socratic method. As a result, it is easier and more expedient to speak to the Head of School first. In these cases, however, it is always better for the parent to have as much specific information as possible so the Head of School can act on that information.

Grievance Policy

Grievance Related to the Classroom

ACAR firmly believes that adults must be models of good character even in the most difficult situations. Should a parent have a grievance concerning a particular class or the administration of the school, that grievance should be resolved using the following internal communication procedure. Issues that arise in a particular classroom should always be addressed to the teacher first since the teacher always has more direct knowledge of the student than anyone else.

- The Teacher: Parents should schedule a meeting with the teacher through the office. Under no circumstance is it ever acceptable for a parent to confront a teacher about an issue with students present, including his/her own.
- Assistant Head of School or designee: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent should speak with the Assistant Head of School or another appropriate administrator as recommended by the Assistant Head of School.
- The Head of School: If the appropriate administrator is unable to adequately address the issue, the parent should discuss the matter with the Head of School.
- The Board: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the Head of School, the parent should refer the matter to the Board, preferably in writing.

Grievance Related to Administration

For grievances regarding an administrator who reports to the Head of School, the grievance should be directed to the individual first, then the Head of School. If necessary, grievances left unresolved by the Head of School should be submitted in writing to the Board. Grievances regarding the Head of School should be directed to the individual first, then in writing to the Board.

Public Records Requests

Tennessee residents wishing to view or receive copies of public records maintained by American Classical Academy Rutherford may submit a records request using a form on the Academy's website. Individuals will need to provide a detailed description of the record(s) requested and whether they would like to view or receive copies of the record(s). The School's records custodian will respond to each request within the time allowed by law, in one of the following ways:

- By providing access to view the record or by providing the actual record,
- Providing an estimate of how much longer it will take to complete the request,
- Requesting additional information to complete the request, or
- Denying the request with a citation to the reason for the denial.



Appendix 1

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Parent/Student Honor Code

Mission

The mission of American Classical Academy Rutherford is to train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich Classical Education in the liberal arts and sciences utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtue.

School Virtues

- Prudence | “I will make wise, well thought-out decisions before acting.”
- Justice | “I will treat everyone with the fairness and respect they deserve.”
- Moderation | “I will exercise self-control in all of my actions.”
- Courage | “I will do the right thing, even when it is unpopular or difficult.”
- Responsibility | “I will do my duty and accept the consequences of my actions.”
- Friendship | “I will treat others with respect and seek friends who make me better.”
- Wisdom | “I will seek those things which are good, true, and beautiful.

School Pledge

- I will learn the True.
- I will do the Good.
- I will love the Beautiful.

School Honor Code

An American Classical Academy Rutherford student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. An American Classical Academy Rutherford student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, responsibility, friendship, and wisdom.

I have carefully read the American Classical Academy Rutherford Family Handbook for this school year and as a family we have discussed the various aspects of the handbook (including the stated school mission, virtues, pledge, and honor code above) seeking to understand its contents and will work to abide by the principles presented.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name(s)

Signature(s)

Date

Student Name

Signature (students Grades 6-12)

Date



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY

RUTHERFORD

American Classical Academy Rutherford
Faculty/Staff Handbook
2024-2025

Contact Information

American Classical Academy Rutherford
2 Ingram Boulevard
La Vergne, Tennessee 37086

<http://www.rutherfordclassical.org>
Phone: TBD

2024-2025 Faculty/Staff Handbook
May 2024

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Introduction

Welcome to the faculty and staff of American Classical Academy Rutherford! This Handbook was prepared by ACAR Administrators and the Board of Directors to ensure that all faculty and staff are on the same page with regard to expectations, rules, benefits, and procedures. Please read the Handbook carefully and refer to it often. Consult with the administration if any of the provisions are unclear. As with all aspects of ACAR, we work together under a spirit of inquiry and common cause, so your constructive feedback is welcome.

Notice

The policies in this Handbook are to be considered guidelines. American Classical Academy Rutherford (the School), at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of the policies in this Handbook at any time without prior notice. Any such action will apply to existing as well as future faculty and staff. Faculty and staff may not accrue eligibility for monetary benefits that they have not earned through actual time spent at work. Faculty and staff will not accrue eligibility for any benefits, rights, or privileges beyond the last day worked. The purpose of this Handbook is to implement policies concerning personnel promulgated by the Board of Directors. Such policies may only be changed by the Board of Directors. No statement or promise by a supervisor, administrator, or department head may be interpreted as a change in policy, nor will it constitute an agreement with a faculty or staff member.

Should any provision in this Employee Handbook be found to be unenforceable and invalid, such finding does not invalidate the entire Handbook, but only the subject provision.

Mission

The mission of American Classical Academy Rutherford is to train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtue.

School Virtues

- Prudence | “I will make wise, well thought-out decisions before acting.”
- Justice | “I will treat everyone with the fairness and respect they deserve.”
- Moderation | “I will exercise self-control in all of my actions.”
- Courage | “I will do the right thing, even when it is unpopular or difficult.”
- Responsibility | “I will do my duty and accept the consequences of my actions.”
- Friendship | “I will treat others with respect and seek friends who make me better.”
- Wisdom | “I will seek those things which are good, true, and beautiful.

School Pledge

- I will learn the True.
- I will do the Good.
- I will love the Beautiful.

School Honor Code

An American Classical Academy Rutherford student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. An American Classical Academy Rutherford student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, responsibility, friendship, and wisdom.

I. Employment

Employment Classifications

Faculty and Staff

Faculty consists of the Administration and Teachers. All of these are salaried employees. Staff members are all other employees of the School. Policies described in this Handbook and communicated by the School apply to all faculty and staff.

Regular Full Time

Regular full-time employees are those employees whose regularly scheduled work week is 30 to 40 hours. Regular full-time employees will be eligible for all benefits offered by the School. This handbook summarizes benefits available at the time of its publication, but which may be amended or altered at any time. The Handbook is not contractual in nature and does not guarantee any continuation of benefits.

Part-Time

Part-time employees are those whose normal work week is less than 30 hours. Part-time employees are not eligible to participate in benefits programs.

“Exempt” and “Non-Exempt” Faculty and Staff

Upon hire, all faculty and staff are classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt.” Exempt faculty and staff include teachers, the Head of School, various administrators, professional staff, technical staff, and others whose duties and responsibilities exempt them from overtime pay provisions as provided by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any applicable state laws. Exempt employees will be advised of this classification at the time of hire, transfer, or promotion. All other employees are “non-exempt.”

Temporary Employees

From time to time, the School may hire faculty and staff for specific periods of time or for the completion of a specific project. An individual hired under these conditions will be considered a temporary employee. The job assignment, work schedule, and duration of the position will be determined on an individual basis. A temporary position will not exceed six (6) months in duration, unless specifically extended by a written agreement. Summer faculty and staff are considered temporary employees.

Those temporary faculty and staff classified as “non-exempt” who work more than twelve (12) hours in one day or more than forty (40) hours during any work week will receive overtime pay. All overtime work must be approved in advance by the Head of School.

Employment with American Classical Academy Rutherford

Employment at American Classical Academy Rutherford is separate and distinct from employment with the school district. Employees of ACAR are not employees of the school district.

At-Will Employment

All Employees of ACAR are at-will employees unless otherwise noted separately in a contract of employment. Accordingly, this means that either the employee or ACAR may end the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause.

Nothing in this handbook or any other School document should be understood as creating a contract, guaranteed or continued employment, a right to termination only "for cause," or any other guarantee of continued benefits or employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Equal Opportunity Statement

ACAR is an equal opportunity employer and takes this obligation very seriously. In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at ACAR will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. ACAR does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices because of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. ACAR makes reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.

Disability and/or Pregnancy Accommodation

ACAR does not discriminate on the basis of a) pregnancy, childbirth or pregnancy-related medical condition, b) physical or mental disability, or c) medical condition as defined under state and federal law. ACAR will comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons who are pregnant and/or persons with disabilities and will not discriminate against these individuals in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. Consistent with this commitment, the School will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified individuals where appropriate to allow the individual to perform the essential functions of the job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the School.

Any employee who, due to pregnancy, disability, and/or a serious medical condition, is unable to perform one or more functions of his or her position, or who believes that a temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position is appropriate, is encouraged to discuss appropriate reasonable accommodations that may be available with the Head of School. ACAR will engage in an interactive process to determine if ACAR can reasonably accommodate these individuals so that they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so is an undue hardship or causes a direct threat to workplace safety.

If leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, such leave may run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave where permitted by state and federal law.

ACAR will not discriminate or retaliate against staff members for requesting an accommodation.

Accommodations for Nursing Mothers

ACAR will provide a reasonable amount of break time for an employee to express breast milk for their nursing child for the period required by applicable laws. Such additional break time will be unpaid unless otherwise required by law. The employee will be provided a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public. Employees should advise management if they need break time and an area for expressing milk.

Religious Accommodation

ACAR will reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs of staff members if the accommodations would resolve a conflict between the individual's religious belief or practice and a work requirement, unless doing so would create an undue hardship.

Requesting a Religious Accommodation

If you need an accommodation because of your religious beliefs or practices, make the request with the Head of School or Human Resources. You may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- A description of the proposed accommodation.
- The reason you need the accommodation.
- How the accommodation will help resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs or practices (or lack thereof) and your work requirements.

ACAR will engage in an interactive dialogue with you to explore potential accommodations that could resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs or practices and work requirements. ACAR encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations. However, the School is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative accommodation, to the extent any reasonable accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on the School.

The School will not discriminate or retaliate against staff members who, in good faith, request a religious accommodation under this policy.

II. Decorum

Using Good Judgment

- All ACAR rules and procedures are intended to create a positive learning environment for individual students and the entire student body. In any case where strictly enforcing the rules detracts from the intent, some alternative enforcement should be found.
- All enforcement of rules should be conducted with the intent to help the student develop good character and moral virtue.
- When interacting with students, particularly disciplinary interactions, teachers should be conscious of the emotional factor. Teachers should be firm, but not harsh. The tone of a message often overrides the content.
- ACAR employees are professionals. It is their job to remain in control, provide direction, de-escalate conflict, and set a positive example.

- Parents should remain informed and should be involved in finding solutions, especially at home, whenever practical.

Standards of Conduct

Employees are expected to work together in service to American Classical Academy Rutherford’s mission, students, and community. This charge has myriad implications for all employees and our common life in the school, and it includes at least the following expectations:

- Employees must work together efficiently and effectively to bring a quality education to our students. This requires all employees to constantly engage students in learning.
- It is particularly important that employees maintain a high standard of moral conduct since, by the nature of the job, employees are role models for young people.
- Employees must maintain friendly and professional relations with colleagues.
- Any complaint or grievance should be taken to the Head of School.
- All faculty and staff must adhere to the principles of classical education as set forth in the appropriate sections of the charter, as articulated by the Head of School, and as named in the School’s core virtues.
- As professionals trained in the mission and philosophy of American Classical Academy Rutherford, teachers have a duty to the School to ensure adherence to the same. The administrators and Board of Directors must be informed of any policy violations. The notifications of such violations are essential to the School’s longevity and viability.

Employee Dress/Appearance

Principles

The student dress code is intended to decrease distractions in class, to foster a healthy respect for fellow students and teachers, and to illustrate the seriousness of education. A crucial element in the success of the dress code policy is the standard set by faculty and staff. Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all faculty and staff, set a standard for students, and affect the image American Classical Academy Rutherford presents to parents and visitors.

Expectations

During school hours, or when representing American Classical Academy Rutherford, faculty and staff are expected to present a clean, neat, and professional appearance. Faculty and staff should consult the Head of School if they have questions as to what constitutes appropriate appearance. Reasonable accommodations will be made to persons with disabilities.

The dress code during school hours is business casual. Business casual attire includes suits, pants, jackets, shirts, skirts, and dresses that, while not formal, are appropriate for a business environment. Examples of appropriate business attire include a shirt and tie with pressed khaki pants, a sweater and a shirt with corduroy pants, a jacket with a skirt or slacks, and a blouse or a sweater with a skirt or pants. Pantsuits and sports jackets also fit the business casual work environment if they are not too formal.

Upper School teachers are encouraged to dress more formally on formal attire Wednesdays. All faculty and staff are permitted to wear jeans and school spirit shirts on specific days that will be set aside for that purpose.

Employees are expected to demonstrate good judgment and professional taste. Use courtesy towards coworkers and your professional image to parents and the community as the factors you use to assess whether you are dressing in business attire that is appropriate.

Business Hours

Our regular office operating hours are 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Summer office hours may vary and will be posted.

During the school year, the school day for students normally begins at 8:00 am and ends at 3:00 p.m.

Full-time faculty members are expected to be at school no later than 7:30 am, unless they have a morning duty that begins earlier. Faculty should expect to stay at school until at least 4:00 pm. All faculty members are required to attend weekly professional development from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm on a day (Monday to Friday) to be determined. Substitute teachers and part-time faculty should arrive at least 15 minutes before their class so they may review any special plans for the day.

Faculty may leave campus during the day for lunch or to run brief errands; however, teachers should not schedule appointments or leave campus for an extended amount of time during their prep periods. Please keep in mind that faculty may be occasionally needed during prep periods to cover classes for absent teachers.

Faculty have normal holidays as published in the school calendar, as well as fall, winter, spring, and summer breaks. Besides regular classroom duties, faculty members may at times be expected to help in supervising students on the grounds; to sub for their colleagues, when needed; to serve on various committees; to attend regular faculty meetings, professional development, open houses, and other school events. Faculty are also encouraged to show school spirit by attending student extracurricular games and events from time to time. Any school-sponsored event held at the school will be free for teachers to attend.

Recording Time

ACAR is required by applicable federal, state, and local laws to keep accurate records of hours worked by certain staff members. To ensure that the School has complete and accurate time records and that staff members are paid for all hours worked, nonexempt staff members are required to record all working time using School time sheets. Speak with the Head of School for specific instructions.

You must accurately record all of your time to ensure you are paid for all hours worked, and must follow established School procedures for recording your hours worked. Time must be recorded as follows:

- Immediately before starting your shift.
- Immediately after finishing work, before your meal period,
- Immediately before resuming work, after your meal period,
- Immediately after finishing work, and
- Immediately before and after any other time away from work.

Notify the Head of School or Human Resources of any pay discrepancies, unrecorded or mis-recorded work hours, or any involuntarily missed meal or break periods.

Paycheck Deductions

ACAR is required by law to make certain deductions from your pay each pay period, including deductions for federal income tax, Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes, state income taxes, state unemployment taxes, and any other deductions required under law or by court order for wage garnishments. The amount of your tax deductions will depend on your earnings and the information you list on your federal Form W-4 and applicable state withholding form.

Permissible deductions for exempt staff members may also include, but are not limited to, deductions for full-day absences for reasons other than sickness or disability and certain disciplinary suspensions. You may also authorize certain voluntary deductions from your paycheck where permissible under state law. Your deductions will be reflected in your wage statement. If you have any questions about deductions from your pay, contact Human Resources.

The School will not make deductions to your pay that are prohibited by federal, state, or local law. Review your paycheck for errors each pay period and immediately report any discrepancies to the Head of School.

You will be reimbursed in full for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions, as defined by law. If an error is found, you will receive an immediate adjustment, which will be paid no later than your next regular payday

Lateness or Absence

Faculty and staff are expected to be at work at the beginning of the day and are expected to remain at work until the end of the day. During hours when students are assigned to a faculty or staff member, they should be supervised at all times.

The School is aware that emergencies, illnesses, bereavement, or pressing personal business sometimes cannot be scheduled outside an employee's working hours. Leave time has been provided for this purpose, and further details can be found in the section for Time-Off Requests. If an employee knows in advance of an upcoming absence, he or she is required to request this time off directly from the Head of School.

If an employee is unable to report to work, or will arrive late, the School Office should be contacted immediately. It is best practice to give as much time as possible to arrange for someone else to cover the position. The Office is required to notify the Head of School of any late arrival, early departure, or absence.

Failure to notify the School of any absence may be considered a voluntary resignation.

Personal Relationships

The ‘public’ life of faculty and staff members of American Classical Academy Rutherford should be consistent with the School’s core virtues. Inappropriate public displays of affection at the school are not acceptable. Employees will not discuss their sexual lives in the workplace.

Conflicts of Interest

A “conflict of interest” occurs when an individual’s private interest interferes with, or appears to interfere with, the interests of the School. For example, a conflict of interest would arise if an employee, or a member of his or her family, received improper personal benefits as a result of his or her position with the School. Any transaction or relationship that could reasonably be expected to give rise to a conflict of interest should be discussed with the Head of School. Such situations may include the following:

- Influencing or attempting to influence anyone who is involved in making or administering a contract or arrangement with the School;
- Soliciting or receiving any gift, reward or promise for recommending, influencing or attempting to influence the award of a contract or arrangement with the School;
- Drafting, negotiating, evaluating, administering, accepting or approving any contract or subcontract or procurement or arrangement of any type on behalf of the School if he/she has, directly or indirectly, any financial interest in such a contract or subcontract or arrangement;
- Non-School employment which adversely affects the employee’s availability or effectiveness in fulfilling job responsibilities;
- Tutoring students for compensation;
- Any type of private business conducted during School time or on School property;
- The receipt of excessive entertainment or gifts of more than nominal value from any person, entity, or organization with whom or with which the School has current or prospective dealings;
- Being in the position of supervising, reviewing, or having any influence on the job evaluation, pay, or benefits of any immediate family member employed by or otherwise associated with the School; and
- Selling anything to the School or buying anything from the School on terms and conditions that are not pre-approved by the Head of School.

This is not an exhaustive list of all possible situations which would constitute conflicts of interest. Further, any relationship or action which creates an expectation of benefit or profit beyond an employee’s normal employment relationship with the School can impair an employee’s ability to exercise good judgment on behalf of the School, and therefore creates an actual or potential conflict of interest. It is the School’s policy that all School employees must scrupulously avoid all such situations.

Any such transaction or relationship that would present an actual or potential conflict of interest for an employee also would likely present a conflict if it is related to a member of such person’s family, including without limitation, spouse, parent, child or spouse of a child, brother, sister, or spouse of a brother or sister. In connection with any actual or potential conflict of interest, an

employee must disclose the existence of the conflict in writing and all facts material to the conflict to the Head of School.

Employment of Family Members

Employees of the School may not be related within the second degree of affinity or consanguinity to their direct supervisor. The Board of Directors may appoint an alternate supervisor, when necessary, and the appointed supervisor will conduct the employee evaluation. All discussion relating to the employee's duties, job performance, evaluation, pay, or benefits will be confined to the appointed supervisor and/or Board of Directors.

Internal Directorships

It is the policy of the School, and consistent with the School's Bylaws, that employees may not serve on the School's Board of Directors. Similarly, employees of the school should not be related, within the second degree of affinity or consanguinity, to any of the School's Directors.

Visitors

Friends and relatives may visit employees during working hours with approval from the Head of School. All visitors should be authorized, sign in, and be accompanied by a School employee while visiting. Employees should not bring their children to work with them. Alternative childcare must be arranged to ensure the employee can be fully focused on work duties.

Social Media

The School recognizes that employees sometimes use social networking (such as personal websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, video or wiki posting, online group discussions, message boards, chat rooms, etc.) for personal reasons as well as business purposes. The School also understands how the use of Internet social networking sites and blogs can shape the public perception of the School.

The School respects the right of employees to maintain a blog or post a comment on social networking sites. However, the School is also committed to ensuring that the use of such communications upholds the School's identity, integrity, and reputation in a manner consistent with its mission, vision, and core virtues. It is incumbent upon employees not to interact with students or parents on social media platforms except when professionally appropriate, such as with a class website. At all times, employees are expected to maintain professional working relationships among themselves, and with the community at large.

III. Classroom Procedures and Student Conduct

Before/After School Procedures

Before School

- Students are not to enter the building before 7:45 a.m.
- Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. must obtain a tardy slip from the front office.
- Upper School students are to enter through the main entrance. After entering, students may go to their lockers. Students will then proceed directly to their first period class. Teachers must be in the hallway outside their classrooms by 7:45 a.m.
- Lower School students in grades K-5 must enter the building through the front entrance. After entering, students are to go directly to their classrooms where they will line up in preparation for walking to the Opening Assembly.

Dismissal from School

- Lower School students in grades K-5 and Upper School students are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. from their classrooms. With their class (in line) and teacher, students will proceed to the front of the school to be picked up in an orderly fashion.
- Students participating in after school activities may be dismissed from the classroom to those activities at 3:30 p.m. Students in K-2 participating in afterschool activities will be picked up directly from the classroom by the faculty or staff member overseeing that activity.
- Any student not picked up at carline by 3:30 p.m. who is not in an afterschool activity should be escorted to the cafeteria where the assigned late pickup duty team will call their parents.

Classroom Procedures

General Guidance

- Teachers should thoroughly learn and plan to implement American Classical Academy Rutherford's schoolwide classroom procedures before class begins and train students to follow them during the first weeks of school. Sample procedures to discuss with students: entering and exiting the room, turning in homework, asking a question, contributing to discussion, taking notes, using a planner, sitting at the desk, handling supplies, sharpening a pencil so as not to interrupt class, using the restroom, etc.
- At no time should students be left in the classroom without an adult present. If there is a need to leave the classroom, teachers should contact the office. Someone will be sent to relieve the teacher.
- Every adult is responsible for every student in the building. All adults must praise or correct any student to reinforce virtues and culture.

Opening Assembly

- Each morning from 8:00 a.m. to 8:10 a.m. the day at ACAR will begin with an Opening Assembly where all students and teachers will gather in the same place to participate in a short meeting that acts as a reminder that school has begun and that school has specific purposes and routines. During the Opening Assembly, those in the gathering will recite the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance, sing an American patriotic song, recite the School Pledge

(I will learn the True, I will do the Good, and I will love the Beautiful), and (on most days) participate or observe a recitation(s) (class, small group, individual).

- All K-6 teachers and students will begin the day by meeting in their classrooms. In the classrooms, all K-6 students will line up to make their way in an organized manner to the Opening Assembly. (All 7-12 students will upon arrival at school place their belongings (backpacks, jackets, etc.) in their lockers. They will gather items they need for the first period class and, in an orderly and respectful manner, make their way to the Opening Assembly.) During the assembly, students will participate in the routines of the assembly, and act in a respectful and quiet manner. Once dismissed, teachers and students will return to class in an orderly manner to begin instruction by 8:10 a.m.

Tardy Procedure

Students who arrive after the beginning of the school day will be considered tardy. Students must make it not only to the school but to class on time to avoid being tardy. Students who are either tardy or returning to school from an appointment must be signed in at the front desk by a parent or guardian. The student will be issued a tardy slip or a returning slip, and the student will be required to deliver this slip to their teacher when they enter the classroom. In grades 7-12, tardy students may be held out of class for the period affected to keep from disrupting the class. Repeated tardiness may affect a student's "seat time" and therefore his eligibility for promotion. Tardiness may be considered an unexcused absence for that class.

Repeated tardiness shall be grounds for disciplinary action. If a student misses more than half a class, the student will be marked absent for the class. After four (4) unexcused tardies, and each unexcused tardy thereafter, a student will be issued an extended day or Saturday Enrichment, and the School shall notify the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of the child's unexcused tardies in writing and request a parent conference.

Leaving the Classroom

- Teachers should make sure students clean up the areas around their seats and push in their chairs before leaving class.
- Upper School:
 - With the exception of physical illness and emergencies, students are not to leave the classroom for any reason (restroom, locker, etc.). If a student does not have his materials, he may not go to his locker to retrieve them.
 - Hall Passes: Every student in the hall during class time must have a signed pass from a teacher. The purpose for the pass, the time, and the teacher's signature must be filled out. If a student does not have a signed Hall Pass, he must return to the class from which he left and may be subject to disciplinary action for skipping class.
- Lower School:
 - The teacher will use discretion when allowing Lower School students to use the restroom. Students should not be continually asking to use the restroom unless for documented medical reasons.
 - Lower School Dismissal Procedure for Transitions (Art, Music, P.E., bathroom breaks, lunch, recess): Students are expected to line up at the door in a straight line as the teacher dismisses them from their desks, one row at a time, once

students are quiet and the areas around desks are clean. With the teacher, students will make the transition to the next setting by walking quietly in a line to the setting.

- It is a good practice to have students quietly and chorally recite poetry, math facts, or other memorization work as the students transition.

Organization/Materials

Students have a folder and notebook for each class. Teachers will give explicit instructions on the organization of that folder and notebook so that students know what they should keep and for how long. Students should bring the appropriate materials to each class every day. Folder colors by subject:

- Latin – Red
- History – Orange
- Math – Black
- Literature – White
- Grammar/Composition/Literacy – Light blue
- Science – Green
- Music – Yellow
- Art - Purple

In addition, students in the Lower School (Grades K-6) will also have a dark blue “Take Home Folder” with two labeled pockets: “Return to School” and “Leave at Home.”

Daily Campus Duties

General Guidance

A conscientious fulfillment of campus duties is integral to the formation of school culture. Therefore, duties are not to be viewed as inconveniences but as a primary means for the teacher to fulfill the vocation of an educator at ACAR. Because of the legal and moral responsibility that each staff member holds regarding students, each staff member must be regular and attentive in completing his or her daily duties. Some guidelines for daily campus duties are:

- The teacher should be at his or her assigned duty spot on time.
- Supervising students includes safety, dress code, and disciplinary awareness, as well as ensuring that students keep the campus in order.
- Staff members should not read while on duty or engage in tutoring or conversations that will diminish their ability to fulfill their duty obligation.

Lower School Lunch Duty

The instructional assistant or other designee assigned as the Lunch Supervisor oversees the lunchroom each day and ensures that all lunches are orderly and that the lunchroom is cleaned. The lunch supervisor will engage with students to provide a joyful and orderly lunch experience.

Other assigned staff members as well as parent volunteers will help monitor the lunchroom. Monitors who need to miss an assigned time must arrange their own coverage and must notify the Assistant Head of School in advance. Monitors must show up on time and remain throughout

the lunch period. Monitors must actively monitor students, including walking among the lunch tables.

The classroom teacher will escort their class to lunch. All teachers will wait with their students until their students are seated at the correct table, and stay with their class until the lunch monitors assume responsibility for the class.

Each class will be assigned a table and students must sit at those assigned tables, filling in with no gaps in seating.

Students are expected to show courtesy by keeping their hands to themselves, make quick choices about their food, and say “please” and “thank you” to all cafeteria staff.

All students should remain seated from the time they sit down with their lunch, until they are dismissed by an adult. Students may talk and play with those around them at a voice level that is loud enough to be heard only by those next to you. If a student needs something, they should raise their hand and wait for an adult to respond. One student at a time may be dismissed by an adult to use the restroom. If a student needs to use the restroom, they should raise their hand and wait for an adult to dismiss them to the bathroom.

Students should keep their areas neat and clean. Students are responsible for cleaning up any mess they may make with their lunch. Throwing and sharing food is not allowed.

When there are 5 minutes left, students will begin to finish eating and prepare to throw away their trash and clean up around their seating area. Each table will be instructed by the monitors when they are to dispose of their trash in the trash bins. After throwing away their trash, they will return to their table until they are dismissed to leave the lunch area. Students will prepare to be dismissed by quietly lining up in their classroom lines to be picked up by their classroom teacher.

Upper School Lunch Duty

Upper School students may eat in either the cafeteria or on the picnic tables outside. Students must choose one location and not move back-and-forth between the two areas.

Each student is expected to clean up after himself or herself.

Carline Duty

- For Drop Off in the morning, teachers are to meet their students in their classrooms in preparation for attending the Opening Assembly. Aides and other staff will participate in securing the students as they make their way from the carline to the classrooms.
- Monitoring the carline duty is very important for Drop Off and Pickup. At the end of the school day, each K-6 teacher will escort their students to the carline for Pickup and remain with the students until each one has been safely picked-up. Primarily, the teachers are there to ensure student safety, but they are also there to make sure the car line runs smoothly.
- Aides and other staff will be responsible for ‘working the carline’ and making sure that the line moves safely and smoothly.

After School Detention (Upper School)

- Faculty members responsible for after-school detention must be in the appropriate classroom by 3:25.
- Detention begins at 3:35.
- Students who show up late need to serve it another day.
- The detention time is to be used for quiet study or counsel.
- Students are to be escorted to the exit no earlier than 4:00 p.m.

Lunch Detention

- Detention begins at the beginning of lunch and ends at the conclusion of the lunch period.
- Students should silently eat their lunch and work on homework during lunch detention.

Recess Detention

- While a teacher may use a few minutes (5 minutes) to counsel a student regarding their behavior at the beginning of recess, no student should miss the entirety of recess.
- Students may be denied the privilege of playing on equipment or playing with classmates during recess as a result of misbehavior. In these cases, the student should be allowed to sit or walk around quietly during recess.

Classroom Behavior

General Behavior Strategies

- Address misbehavior immediately, if possible.
- Address student misbehavior consistently, respectfully, and calmly. In most cases, if possible, address the behavior privately.
- Appropriately praise students doing the right thing, but not for the purpose of indirectly correcting other students' behavior.
- Follow up with positive and caring interaction.

General Expectations

- Apart from special occasions, no food is allowed in the classroom (including gum).
- Water bottles are permitted if they are clear and filled only with water. Lower School classrooms should have a designated area for water bottles away from student desks.
- The general posture prepared for instruction and discussion is that students are to sit up straight with their feet on the floor and face the teacher.

Student desks and desk areas are to be neatly kept at all times. Aisles must be clear. Upper School student backpacks may be placed under students' desks or along classroom walls if aisles are too narrow.

Hallway Behavior and Restroom Breaks

Expectations for Students

All Lower School students will only talk in the hallway if speaking to an adult so as not to interrupt classes in session.

Individual restroom breaks during class time should be relatively rare. Use common sense to determine when there is a genuine need to immediately use the restroom.

It is good practice to remind students of hallway expectations each time they are lined up to transition or go to a restroom break.

In the Lower School (Grades K-6), group restroom breaks will take place daily. While students are waiting to use the restroom, they should be involved in a learning activity. Examples of activities while waiting to use the restroom:

- Designate a student to read aloud to the rest of the class
- Recite memory work in unison
- Math fact flashcards

Students are to stand in line, not sit on the floor, while waiting outside of the restrooms.

A male student should be assigned as the bathroom checker to check the boys' restroom for cleanliness (graffiti, dropped paper towels, etc.) after the restroom break is complete. A female student should be assigned as the bathroom checker to check the girls' restroom for cleanliness.

In the Upper School (Grades 7-12), students should clean up the area around their desks at the conclusion of the period. This includes collecting all personal items, throwing away any garbage, and cleaning any marks left on the desk.

Once students are prepared to leave the classroom, the teacher dismisses the students to their next class, standing in the doorway to offer them a good-bye and wish them a good day. Students should thank the teacher for the lesson of the day and return the greeting and well-wishes.

Teachers receiving students into their classroom should line up the entire class outside of the doorway, offer clear directions for what they should do upon entering the classroom, and greet students as they enter.

Upper School students will use the restroom and lockers between classes during their 3-minute transition time. Teachers will start classes on time and strictly enforce the School's tardy policy.

In the hallway, Upper School students may speak quietly with their friends. Students should be encouraged to greet faculty members, guests, and other adults as they pass. Students should use the right side of the hallway to move from class to class.

Upper School students may not cluster in the restroom or in the hallway. The teachers with classrooms nearest the restroom should closely monitor the restrooms during transitions.

In the hallway, students may not run, yell, horseplay, or engage in other behaviors that are unsafe or take away from the proper decorum of a school environment. Repeated infractions or actions that rise to the level of a serious issue may be directed to the Assistant Head of School or Head of School for further disciplinary action.

Expectations for Staff/Faculty

- If inappropriate behavior is exhibited by a student, it is the observing teacher's duty to correct that student's behavior. It is crucial that all teachers participate in the monitoring of the hallway.
- All teachers must stand in the hallways during passing periods before, during, and after school to deter inappropriate behavior.
- Teachers should take responsibility if it is necessary to enforce consequences for poor student behavior.
- Teachers should have conversations with students to build rapport.
- Teachers should greet students outside their room as students enter the classroom. This encourages rapport and school-wide community and lessens potential behavior problems.

Special Procedures Regarding Student Food

Students with Allergies

All allergy information concerning a student will be communicated by the Main Office to the teachers. It is the responsibility of each teacher that he or she is aware of the allergies of the students in their care and ensure that the necessary protocols are followed to keep the student safe.

For Lower School (Grades K-6), parents will be informed that a special table is available during lunch for students with allergies. All students with life-threatening nut allergies will sit at the nut-free table unless a parent has given permission otherwise. Only students with life-threatening allergies and one friend whom each student designates will sit at the table.

For the Lower School, classrooms with one or more students with a life-threatening nut allergy will be designated nut-free classrooms. This means NO nuts may be eaten in the classroom (snacks, birthday treats, etc.). When this is the case, a notification will be sent to the classroom's parents. A reminder should be sent to parents in the teacher's weekly email updates and when making arrangements for classroom birthday celebrations.

Birthday Celebrations and Classroom Parties

For the Lower School, food treats may be part of classroom birthday celebrations. Parents of students that have reported food allergies/intolerances must provide an appropriate substitute for birthday celebrations if they would like their son/daughter to participate. It is not practical for teachers to be responsible for checking ingredient lists of all treats provided by parents. Therefore, students with reported allergies/intolerances will not be given a birthday treat that was not provided by their parent.

Student Work

Makeup Work

If a student is absent, he has one school day to make up the homework for every day absent. Additional guidance:

- Significant assignments given two or more weeks in advance of the due date will, depending upon the assignment, be due immediately upon a student's return or on the original due date (i.e. turned in by a parent or online).
- Teachers should be flexible if a student misses several days in a row due to an illness or a family emergency.
- It is the student's responsibility to find out what assignments the student has missed. Students can check PowerSchool and/or with the teacher directly before school, after school, or during study hall.
- If a student is absent for the day of a test, the student should expect to complete that test on the day the student returns. If the student is absent for a day or days prior to the test, the teacher is encouraged to be flexible so that the student can obtain notes and other assignments that were missed during the student's absence.
- Planned absences (including for school extra-curricular/sports absences): If a student is leaving school early because of an extra-curricular commitment or another appointment, the student must get that evening's assignments before the student leaves. The student must also turn in any homework due that day before the student leaves school. The student can check PowerSchool for these assignments or the assignment postings in the classroom.
- Teachers should have a designated area in their classroom for students to turn in makeup work.

Expectation of Quality for Student Work

All assignments (homework, class work, tests, and papers) must be neat and legible. Ripped, torn, or scribbled-on paper will not be accepted. Paper torn out of a spiral notebook is not acceptable. Lined notebook paper/loose-leaf paper is required for all Upper School assignments unless specifically directed by the teacher.

Standard Heading

Students are expected to use the following Standard Heading for all Upper School classes:

Upper Left Corner
Name
Date

Upper Right Corner
Subject, Period
Assignment

Example:

Becky Holland
February 22, 2017

Biology, 4th period
2-1 Section Assessment #1-5

Electronic Devices

Definitions and Rules

Electronic devices must be powered off and may not be used during the school day, clubs/athletic practice, Before and Aftercare, or drop-off and pick-up, without express staff permission.

Students may not keep electronic devices on their person during the academic school day. If a student must bring a cell phone or other electronic device to school, he or she must keep it in a locker or classroom cubby for the entire day including during recess, lunch, passing periods, and study halls. Such devices include but are not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, hand-held video games, cell phones, and any other device or accessory with wireless or cellular capabilities, including but not limited to watches and eyewear. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices and at the Head of School's discretion.

Teachers are to confiscate the electronic device of any student who is using a phone or other electronic device during the day and give the device to the Assistant Head of School or Head of School as soon as possible. Students who break this rule will be subject to disciplinary action. Once a device has been confiscated, the following procedure will be used to return the device:

1st Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the student or parent when school is dismissed. Parent will be contacted.

2nd Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the parent when school is dismissed. Parent will be contacted.

3rd Confiscation: The device will be held for three days and can be picked up by the parent after that time. Parent will be contacted.

Confiscations beyond three may result in additional disciplinary action, including possible suspension. American Classical Academy Rutherford is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of electronic devices left on campus.

If there is reason to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the device may be powered on and searched.

Students needing to use a phone may ask to use the office phone.

Student Uniforms

- The Assistant Head of School will check student dress throughout the day, before school, in the hallways during transitions, during lunch and recess, and after school. All teachers should also check student dress at the beginning of the day with periodic checks throughout the day.
- All staff members are expected to enforce the dress code at all times, regardless of whether or not you have the student in class at the time or even know the student. The Assistant Head of School is available to help with any potentially uncomfortable or inappropriate situations (for example, an inappropriately-dressed female student in a male teacher's class).

- If a student is inappropriately attired, inform the student of the violation and send the student to the office. A uniform violation form will be filled out and filed with the Assistant Head of School.
- The office may have a variety of uniform items for students to wear to be in compliance. Parents may also be called to assist the student in obtaining the appropriate attire. The student will be allowed to attend class when he is wearing the proper attire. Obtaining the proper items will be done as quickly as possible so that the student does not miss class time.
- Students who are unsure about a particular item should check the uniform policy in the Family Handbook and the school website.
- Multiple violations will be assigned additional consequences.
- Students are required to remain in uniform until leaving campus, unless participating in an after-school activity that requires them to change.
- The only exceptions to the uniform policy will be spirit days, dress up days, and certain special events designated by the Head of School.

Public Displays of Affection

The school does not allow any extended public displays of affection. This includes hand-holding, long hugs, and kissing. Teacher presence in the hallways and other areas outside of the classroom helps deter this behavior.

For a first offense of hugging or holding hands, give the student(s) a gentle reminder to disengage in such behavior.

In the case of student kissing, or multiple violations, tell the students to disengage in the behavior and refer the student to the Assistant Head of School.

Student Disciplinary Procedures

Disciplinary action ranges from verbal warnings to suspension and expulsion, and will be used to promote both a student's self-discipline and an orderly environment for all. Even when more serious discipline like a suspension is necessary, the purpose is not to punish but to educate.

Minor infractions (i.e. uniform violation, refusal to follow instructions, being unprepared for class, incomplete homework) or disruptions will largely be handled in the classroom in a way suitable to the age of the student. Most behavior will be handled by staff with verbal warnings. In this case, the staff member will give reminders and have students complete the correct behavior as a reminder of the rule or policy. Examples of implementing this procedure with verbal warnings include:

- Go back and walk, not jump or run
- Open locker again and shut it, not slam it
- Go to the office and get the correct item of clothing
- Take a tardy, and go get the correct supplies for class
- Sit in the front of class where you will not be distracted
- Rewrite the homework so it is readable
- Repeat what was said or done in a respectful way

Whenever a student misbehaves repeatedly or flagrantly, the consequences for the infraction will be immediate, relevant, and effectual. Rather than allow misbehavior to fester in the classroom, teachers will send disruptive students to the office, normally to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee.

The two primary tools for addressing disruptive or wrongful behavior are detention and Discipline Referrals. *Detentions* are generally used for more basic infractions, while *Discipline Referrals* are used for more serious violations.

Detention

Students may receive detention for minor infractions, and detentions may be given by teachers or administrators. Detention will occur before or after school, during lunch, on the weekend, or at another time determined by the Head of School. Weekend detentions require students to be dressed in their uniform. Detention takes precedence over any extracurricular activity. Students who miss detention will need to make it up and serve another detention. Repeatedly missing detention may result in suspension.

Detentions are cumulative throughout the school year. Listed below are the first three detention infractions and consequences. More than three infractions may result in the student receiving a Discipline Referral.

First Infraction: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. The student will be given a detention form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator.

Second Infraction: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the infraction. The student will be given a detention form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator.

Third Infraction: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the infraction. Parent must return with student for mandatory Parent Conference.

Discipline Referrals

For consistent and/or more serious disruptions, the student will be sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee and receive a Discipline Referral. They may be issued by teachers, staff, or administrators, and they will accumulate over the course of the year. A student's total will not reset at the semester, but it will reset at the end of the year. Receiving a Discipline Referral indicates that a student's behavior is a serious problem. Earning repeated Discipline Referrals will result in more serious consequences each time. A parent or guardian must sign the Discipline Referral form and the student should return the form to the administrator. It is our hope that the consequences for receiving a Discipline Referral will encourage students to display good character and act in accordance with the school's mission.

First Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. The student will be given a Discipline Referral form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator. Student may receive a detention and/or be suspended.

Second Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. The student will be given a Discipline Referral form that is to be signed by a parent and returned to the administrator. Student may receive a detention and/or be suspended.

Third Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. Student will be sent home for the remainder of the day and must return with parent upon return to school. Parent may be asked to attend class with student for a part or the entire day of return. Student may be suspended.

Fourth Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. Student will be sent home for the remainder of the day and must return with parent upon return to school. Upon return to school, student and parent will be given a behavioral contract to review and sign. Students will not be allowed to attend school-related events. Student may be suspended.

Fifth Discipline Referral: Student is removed from class and is sent to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee. Parent is called and notified of the referral. Student will be sent home for the remainder of the day and must return with parent upon return to school. Upon return to school, the potential expulsion process may be discussed and/or implemented. Student may be suspended or considered for expulsion.

Parents who attend school with their student due to a referral will be seated in or near the classroom (location assigned by the Head of School, Assistant Head of School or designee). Cell phones and/or electronic devices are strictly prohibited while in the presence of students.

At no time will a student's disciplinary record be discussed with another student or parent.

School Counseling Procedures

Referrals for student counseling services may be found in the Main Office. Students may be referred in the event that they are in need of support with social, emotional, or academic challenges.

If there is an emergency that requires immediate assistance, contact the Main Office.

Mandatory Reporting

All educators are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. In the event that you suspect a student is being abused, report your suspicions to a member of the school administration immediately.

Work with a member of the school administration to ensure the proper protocol takes place before completing the report. After a report is made, email the case number to the administrator you are working with.

IV. Instruction

Curriculum Oversight

The original source for the American Classical Academy Rutherford curriculum is the American Classical Education - K-12 Program Guide developed for Hillsdale-affiliated schools. Due to state requirements, teacher schedules, and financial restrictions, ACAR may deviate from the original Program Guide to meet state and local requirements. The Head of School is the director of curriculum, and therefore, all significant decisions about curriculum should be made by the Head of School. The Head of School will construct the curriculum so that it is consistent with the School's mission and the classical, liberal-arts program as described in the School's charter. Teachers must design their courses under the Head of School's direction. Teachers must inform the Head of School of any significant changes to a course or subject, whether it is being taught for the first time or has been taught for years.

Pedagogy

Philosophical Guidance

Teachers new to classical education often find its pedagogy rather mysterious. They have been trained in various methods of instruction—project-based learning, 1:1 technology methods, learning clusters, direct instruction, etc.—and they think that classical education is like that. The truth, however, is that classical pedagogy does not fit into a neat package that can be described with an acronym or a short sentence. To understand classical pedagogy, you will need to understand several important things about it:

- Classical education is focused on human nature, and takes its cues and direction from that. We are shaping our students in knowledge and in virtue, and we need to account for their capability and maturity while we encourage them towards excellence. This means, among other things, that instruction may look a little different at different grade levels—an idea that the Trivium model usefully simplifies.
- Classical education is traditional. Human beings do not change much over time, and neither do the ways they learn. Teachers should employ strategies that have worked in the past while evaluating whether or not to adapt so-called “new” practices for use in their classrooms. The Trivium model of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric has been in use since the Middle Ages, and its staying power is in its truth and simplicity: Students must learn the grammar of a subject before they can learn how its pieces fit together—its logic. And they must understand its logic before they can rearrange or explain its pieces in a way that is compelling or beautiful—its rhetoric.
- Classical education is interested in knowledge for its own sake. We approach the world with wonder because it is full of interesting things to know, regardless of whether this knowledge can easily turn a profit. We expect that our students will specialize in a particular professional field, but our job is to provide them with a broad and rich knowledge of the world and their place in it, to provide them with a foundation that will allow for all different kinds of specialization.
- Classical education is concerned with the moral formation of students. Moral formation occurs in many different ways, and not least in the curriculum. The stories we tell our students and the subjects we focus on shape their imaginations and teach them about what is important. The intent of our curriculum is not to be morally pedantic, but to shape our students with a view to what is good, true and beautiful.

- Classical education aspires to Socratic discussion. We want our students to engage seriously in the most difficult questions, but this does not come automatically. It comes by providing our students with a foundation of things to think while simultaneously teaching them how to think. Often this will look like an ordinary lecture or story, but even early elementary teachers should be asking probing questions and helping their students to do the same. With a strong basis in knowledge and the intellectual development that comes from asking and answering tough questions, our students will grow into effective thinkers.

What Makes an Effective Classical Teacher?

Know your content: Effective classical teachers know their content. The best teachers are always those who are immersed in the curriculum. Great classical teachers have a deep and fluent knowledge of the content they are teaching. Know how the content fits into the wider scope of our curriculum. Ask questions like:

- In what other grade levels is this content covered?
- In what depth is it covered in those grade levels?
- How can I best build on that previous knowledge?
- How can I best prepare them for deeper, more rigorous explorations of this content in the future?

Be able to offer a variety of examples and explanations of the content you are studying. Be prepared to counter previously acquired misunderstandings and be aware of common misconceptions among students.

- Create a supportive environment: Your interactions with students must be simultaneously warm and authoritative. You should always be working to intentionally create a classroom culture of mutual respect and care between teacher and students and among students. Your classroom environment should be one in which students feel safe to take intellectual risks without the threat of harsh judgment by teachers or peers. Great classical teachers simultaneously promote the motivation to learn for the joy of learning while creating a climate of high expectations, behaviorally and academically.
- Maximize opportunities to learn: Great classical teachers model the importance of time by not wasting it. Without being frantic, have a sense of urgency in your lessons. Have clear, consistent routines and procedures in place for everything that needs to get done in the classroom and never assign busywork (worksheets, vocabulary word copying, crossword puzzles, and other timewasters).

Clear instructions for students go a long way toward creating a classroom climate in which time is used well. Ensure that rules, expectations, and consequences for behavior are explicit, clear, and consistently applied. Prevent, anticipate, and respond to potentially disruptive incidents. Reinforce positive behaviors with praise, not treats.

When it comes to teaching, variety is not the spice of life. Routines, habits, and consistency create the most effective learning environments. Doing just a few things well is the most effective approach to the classroom.

Signal awareness of what is happening throughout the classroom at all times. Your phone (and earpiece/headphones) should never be out in front of students, whether in the classroom, in the hallway, or on the playground.

Activate thinking: Great classical teachers have clear learning goals for their students and for each of their lessons. While writing an “objective” or “standard” on the board is generally a waste of time and a distraction, having a clear goal for what students should take away at the end of class is essential.

Direct instruction is one of the most effective means of teaching. Great classical teachers present and communicate new ideas clearly, with concise, appropriate, engaging explanations. You should connect new ideas to what has previously been learned (and reactivate that prior knowledge). New skills should be modeled and demonstrated with appropriate scaffolding and challenge.

Socratic instruction is also a highly effective means of teaching. Use questions and dialogue to promote elaboration and connected, flexible thinking among learners and to elicit student thinking, interpreting, and communicating. Characteristics of good questions:

- Accessible to all - students at all ability levels can understand and access the question
- Challenging to all – students at all ability levels are challenged by the question
- Aim at Truth – the answer to the question is not merely a matter of “feeling” or “my truth” but aims at ultimate, objective Truth
- Provoke multiple student thoughts – while Truth is one, it is possible to reach it by many roads

There is a general flow to Socratic questioning:

- Open question
- Student response(s)
- Follow-up questions
- Discussion
- Truth
- Application/implementation

Great classical teachers respond appropriately to feedback from students about their thinking, knowledge, and understanding. Seek to give students actionable feedback to guide their learning.

- Give students tasks that embed and reinforce learning: Great classical teachers require students to practice until learning is fluent and secure. You should ensure that learned material is reviewed and revisited to prevent forgetting.
- Eschew education myths in favor of time-tested practices: Project-based learning, “hands-on” activities, discovery learning, “student-centered” classrooms, and group work are almost always ineffective. Learning styles, multiple intelligences, and related theories

are myths. All instruction should be multimodal (involving visuals, reading, writing, discussing, etc.) and primarily conveyed through language.

- Great classical teachers help students to plan, regulate, and monitor their own learning, progressing appropriately from structured to more independent learning as students develop knowledge and expertise.

Practical Guidance

- The schedule provides just enough time to offer a lesson and/or a seminar discussion of a topic or work. Each class period is thus used for instruction while homework is reserved for the home. Natural exceptions to this would be, for instance, in-class essay writing, the completion of a study guide, project, or lab, or the completion of sample problems or exercises to test comprehension prior to attempting the homework.
- Teachers should instruct from the front and center of the classroom, and in peripatetic fashion. If you move around the room while teaching it can help students focus. During seminar-style classes in the Upper School, teachers may sit.
- Pedagogy can include daily warm-ups, review of organizing principles or guiding questions, interactive lecture and discussion, Socratic questioning, seminar, debate, reading aloud, close reading, composition, recitation, call and response, demonstration, lab work, music and theater performance, drawing and painting in art class, formative assessment, and summative assessment.
- Instructional methods to avoid include project-based instruction, group work, excessive reliance on PowerPoint, films, fluffy games and activities, crafts, and methods that disturb learning in nearby classrooms. Research should rarely be a significant focus, especially in the lower grades.
- While students are working independently or testing, teachers should monitor students and move about the room to ensure students are on task and that student work is productive. Teachers may sit at their desks for brief periods of time while students are working.
- Class time is precious, and a minute lost is lost forever. A minute per day not used for instruction adds up to three 60-minute blocks of time, or about three and a half class periods, over the course of the school year. Lessons should begin promptly and end on time.
- In the Lower School, every subject should be taught every day.

Using Videos for Instruction

From time to time, videos or other media may be used to support a classroom lesson. To be used in class they must meet a specific curricular objective and will not have profane language or sexually explicit material. Teachers must receive prior approval from the Head of School to show a video more than 15 minutes in length.

Videos are typically of three kinds:

1. *Educational films.* Educational films may be shown at the discretion of each faculty member, so long as the selection to be viewed by the class does not run for more than 15 minutes in length. Faculty must view the entire video ahead of time to ensure that the content of the video is appropriate and applicable to the course. The teacher must have a clear rationale for how the video will advance the understanding of the students, and the

teacher must do some active teaching to integrate the video into the course (post-viewing discussion and/or writing assignment, requirement of note-taking, etc.). It is not adequate to show a video and let it speak for itself; a lifetime of television viewing likely means that when the “tube” is on, the student’s mind is habitually off. Teachers must exert extra effort to counteract this unfortunate mental habit so common to the visual age in which we live.

2. *Videos of works read by students.* Since our school is deeply committed to the reading and understanding of original texts, the viewing of videos of works in the second category—works already read, or to be read—is generally prohibited. The video is a medium entirely different from the book, and is, indeed, another interpretation of the work. Further, a film/video of a work of literature limits the imaginative possibilities of the student, and can be misused as a shortcut to understanding it. In some cases, we do view screenplays of dramatic works we have already read to better understand the interpretive possibilities of stage performance. If a faculty member wishes to show a film in this category, the permission of the Head of School is required. Note that video biographies of authors should likewise not be shown. We read great literature because of what it is, not because of who wrote it; the great books are immeasurably more interesting and rewarding than are facts about the lives of their authors. Class time should always be devoted to these inexhaustible classics, not to biographical curiosity that distracts from the study of these works.
3. *Videos viewed for enjoyment and/or artistic value.* Videos of this last category are not permitted unless Head of School approval has been granted. There are some films that can offer insight into a historical period or an aspect of classical culture that may be appropriate for a specific course, but this determination will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Going Outside for Class

Generally speaking, class should not take place outside. The distractions of the outdoors and the novelty of a change of pace often make it impossible for students to learn outside, although the idea does sound nice. Possible exceptions are few and far between, but could include an art lesson sketching from nature or a science lesson gathering natural objects for observation or a lab. In the Lower School, remember that students spend a great deal of time outdoors during recess and encourage them to gather nature samples for science class during that time.

Lesson Planning

Well-planned, well-taught lessons are the basic requirement of every teacher. Every lesson must include rigorous instruction, recall and writing practice, and be taught in accordance with the classical model of pedagogy.

Lessons should follow the month-by-month schedule provided in the Hillsdale K-12 Program Guide, unless approved by the Head of School.

Upper School content-area teachers must work closely with grade-level colleagues to look for cross-curricular opportunities.

A simple approach to lesson planning:

- Plan backwards
 - Write the assessment that will test students’ knowledge of the topic before planning the unit or individual lessons.
 - Prepare daily lesson plans with the assessment in mind.
- Write in 2-3 sentences what you want students to know by the end of the lesson.
- Using the teacher texts, student texts, and other resources provided:
 - Ask: What vocabulary do students need to be able to speak meaningfully about this topic? Identify core content such as:
 - Geography and places
 - Important people
 - Terms and Topics
 - Significant dates
 - Important images
- Thoughtfully generate a variety of questions to pose to the class to engage all learners.
 - Refer back to the section on questions under “What makes an effective classical teacher?”
 - Develop high-quality activities that require students to demonstrate understanding of the topic through the use of essential vocabulary; for example:
 - Science: short labs
 - Reading aloud a book
 - Retelling/lecture
 - Discussing pictures
 - Writing from pictures
 - Writing with topic sentences
- Assess knowledge and reteach as necessary. Exit tickets should be previews of the final assessment.

Lesson Structure

Every lesson at American Classical Academy Rutherford, no matter the subject, should have the same general structure:

- If students are entering the classroom (such as in the Upper School or in movement to Fine Arts classes in the Lower School), students should line up in the hallway outside of the door.
- If they are already in their seats, the teacher may need to gain students’ attention using an attention-getter.

- The teacher then briefly explains what students need out on their desks and anything they should be doing when they enter or begin the lesson.
- Upper School students should then be greeted by their teacher as they enter the classroom. Students may recite memory work or sing a song while entering and getting out the appropriate materials. All lessons should be bookended by such recitations. The teacher may use this time to quickly check homework for completion.
- “Do Now” work, such as a quiz on the previous evening’s reading homework or a single math problem, may be a good way to get students’ attention and prepare them for the day’s lesson. “Do Now” work that takes more than 3 minutes is generally a waste of class time, however. It is better to promptly begin the lesson.
- Once all students are seated with only the appropriate materials on their desks, the teacher provides a brief overview of the content of the day’s lesson and a review of the previous day’s lesson. These two items combined should take 3 minutes—certainly no more than 5. Use the first few minutes of class to front load the most important information and provide a road map for students to follow during the lesson. Give students an overview of what they will be learning at the beginning of each lesson.
- The teacher should then begin the lesson, whether a lecture, demonstration, Socratic Seminar, or some other mode of instruction.
- At the end of the lesson, the teacher briefly reviews the entire lesson through questions, written or spoken. This is an “exit ticket.” This should take 3-5 minutes at most.
- The teacher may choose to have students pack up during this final “exit ticket” or after it while reciting memory work or singing a song together.
- If Lower School students are moving to another room, students are lined up by row by the teacher.
- Students in the Upper School should thank the teacher for the lesson as they exit the classroom.

Teaching Literature

Appropriate activities in a literature class may include reading, writing, discussing, annotating, and contextual and interpretative lectures. Inappropriate activities in a literature class include activities such as worksheets, videos, constant reference to “character, plot, theme, setting, etc.”

Literature lessons should focus on the story, on the beauty of the poem, on the language used – not generalized “themes” or “skills.”

Students should always be working to memorize something (poetry, particularly beautiful passages of prose, etc.) and recitations are an excellent way to bookend lessons. Recitations can also be used in the hallway as you move from classroom to classroom, wait for the restroom, etc.

- Routines for literature:
 - Reading together most days; teacher should do most of the reading
 - Do NOT use “popcorn” or “round robin” reading
 - Do NOT use audiobooks in the classroom
 - DO use guided reading

- DO use paired reading, as appropriate
- DO have students read silently and independently, as appropriate
- Act it out; use voices; be a bigger version of you
- Stop frequently but not too frequently to ask questions and discuss
 - Prepare a few questions ahead of time, including a mix of choral responses and cold calling
 - Students should look at each other and respond to each other during discussions
- Even on days when you are not conducting a formal Socratic seminar, allow students opportunities to discuss during and after reading. Use both your prepared questions and questions from students to inspire and guide discussion. Students may prepare their own questions before class, as appropriate for age and ability. They may also have questions that arise on the spot.
- Formal discussion: Socratic seminar
 - Grades 2-5: Once per week
 - Grades 6-8: 2-3 times per week
 - As students grow into high school, seminar days should begin to outnumber lecture days
- In every lesson, give students the opportunity to write about what they have read. In the Lower School, all writing should be done in class. In the Upper School, most writing should be done in class and should include:
 - A few sentences at the end of each class period, at a minimum
 - A paragraph at least once a week
 - An essay at least once each semester

Teaching History

A history lesson must include more than just reading the textbook. Lecture and discussion are essential.

The most effective and engaging way to teach history is to teach it as a story. While places, people, and dates are an important part of history, history is the lived experience of those who have gone before us; it should not be reduced to a mere chronological list.

Students should always be working on memorizing something (lines from speeches, historical documents, etc.). These recitations are excellent bookends for lessons.

Every history lesson needs to include a geography component. Time and place are deeply linked. Make frequent use of the classroom map; have students move to the map to point out the places being discussed.

History presents a great opportunity for the effective use of technology in the classical classroom. Use technology to show historical costumes, important places, paintings, and photos, but do NOT use technology to replace teaching by relying on documentaries or other longform media.

- Routines for history:
 - Kindergarten: Reading aloud, memorization, map work
 - By the end of kindergarten, all students should be able to:
 - Name the presidents in order
 - Name all 50 states
 - Identify all continents and oceans on a map
 - Grades 1-6: Read alouds, lecture, discussion, memorization, and map work should all be included in quality history lessons
 - A simple start to a great lecture is outlining the textbook
 - Good history lessons are good storytelling.
 - Provide students with selections from primary sources. These are great pieces for Socratic seminars as well.
 - As students move up the grades, more primary sources should be used and less use should be made of textbooks.
 - Every lesson should involve some note-taking, as age-appropriate, actively modeled by the teacher
 - Note-taking is not merely writing vocabulary words
 - Note-taking is coherently organizing important concepts, dates, people, ideas, etc.
 - Upper School: Primary source readings, lecture and note-taking, discussion, memorization, and map work should all be included in quality history lessons.
 - There should be little to no textbook usage in class. If textbook reading is assigned, it should be assigned as homework. Rather, class should primarily be centered around reading, discussing, and diving deeply into historical events through primary source documents.
 - Note-taking must be completed by students with an increasing degree of independence. Teach note-taking explicitly. If you expect students to be able to do something well, you must explicitly teach them how to do it well and provide them with frequent opportunities to practice the skill and receive actionable feedback on their progress.

Teaching Math

Math should be taught both explicitly and Socratically.

To teach math explicitly, the teacher must provide clear, effective explanations. Teachers need to be aware of potential misunderstandings and work actively to counter them. In the Lower School, every math lesson should involve the use of manipulatives. In the Upper School, every lesson should be accompanied by the use of imagery such as graphs, charts, etc.

To teach math Socratically, use questions to engage students and encourage them to think. As a general rule, never write on the board before a student has explained it orally. Every lesson should include extensive opportunities for students to take part in timed, guided practice. Every lesson should also include teaching a variety of ways to solve a problem. There should be a strong emphasis on mental math—students should be solving problems in their heads to the greatest extent possible.

Teaching Science

Science lessons should generally follow the rhythm: do, read, discuss, write.

- K-2
 - Primarily, use read-alouds accompanied by visual demonstrations
 - “Hands-on” activities should be a relative rarity, not a daily occurrence. All “hands-on” activities must have a specific point in mind. Avoid turning them into time-wasters
- 3-6
 - Textbooks may be used, but the primary source of learning should be lecture and teacher-led demonstrations. All lectures should include strong student engagement and accompanying visuals.
 - Students take notes as modeled by the teacher each day
 - Notes should not merely be a list of vocabulary words
 - Notes should include important concepts organized coherently
 - Occasional “hands-on” activities with a specific goal in mind are permitted, but should be rare and focused when they do occur
- Upper School
 - Students should primarily read textbooks independently, when textbooks are used at all. Most class time must be dedicated to lecture, questions, and teacher-led demonstrations.
 - Students should take notes with a greater degree of independence each year in the Upper School. Teach the skill explicitly and provide extensive practice and feedback. Use questions and emphasis to indicate what should be written down.
 - Hands-on activities should be rare and focused.

Literacy Instruction

Literacy Essentials is American Classical Academy Rutherford's curriculum for teaching children to read. It is based on the Orton-Gillingham method (which has a long history of effectiveness for students with dyslexia) and is updated to reflect the latest research on the brain and effective reading instruction. *Literacy Essentials* is a writing approach to reading. Writing and encoding (spelling) are more difficult skills than reading/decoding. If students can spell a word, they can read it. *Literacy Essentials* is also a comprehensive literacy program that goes beyond phonics, handwriting, and spelling to incorporate phonemic awareness, reading fluency, composition, syntax, and grammar in kindergarten through third grade.

The heart of *Literacy Essentials* is direct, explicit, systematic instruction in phonics. Teachers clearly introduce students to each sound and spelling pattern (phonogram) in the English language, then provide practice to mastery. The teacher manuals provide a clear sequence of instruction for introducing phonograms and spelling rules. We do NOT use an implicit, "as needed" approach to teaching phonics. We do NOT use a Whole Language or Balanced Literacy approach. More research exists to support the teaching of explicit, systematic phonics than for any other topic in education. (See, for example, the National Reading Panel (2000) or Ehri (2006) or Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001)).

Literacy Essentials is multisensory. Students hear, see, say, and write the phonograms and spelling words. Phonemic awareness is built into the program. It is therefore appropriate for students who struggle with reading because of difficulties with phonemic awareness. Because it is multisensory, explicit, and systematic, *Literacy Essentials* is suitable for students at Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III.

All faculty and staff who work with students in K-6, or students with reading difficulties at any grade level, are expected to consistently work to increase their knowledge of the program by attending trainings, observing and collaborating with other teachers, and learning the phonograms and spelling rules to the very best of their ability.

All literacy instruction at American Classical Academy Rutherford will align with *Literacy Essentials*. Use of supplemental materials or outside curriculum is prohibited unless approved by Head of School. Under no circumstances should any teacher download or use materials or worksheets from Teachers Pay Teachers or from other literacy programs. Instead, refer to your Teacher Manual and the Reading Progression. Ask for help with lesson planning from the Literacy Coordinator or the Head of School, and increase the amount of practice your students are receiving.

Teachers of reading have a weighty and honorable responsibility. Our instruction will impact the intellectual, moral, social, and economic development of our students for the rest of their lives. Nevertheless, do not let the weight of this responsibility deprive you of the joy of learning. The spelling code of the English language is complex, but also fascinating. The choral Question and Answer routines may feel uncomfortable at first, but they are an engaging and effective way to teach. If you enjoy the journey of literacy, your students will as well.

Classroom Appearance

- Classroom décor should reflect the serious work that teachers in a classical school do. Teachers are encouraged to use posters and other decorative items that reflect the course content and a liberal arts environment. Appropriate classroom displays include a short list of classroom procedures, anchor charts, photos of historical figures, a timeline of events studied in history, and occasional items related to the curriculum.
- Classrooms should be clean, organized, and free of clutter. Student work should be displayed in an organized fashion.
- Teachers should decorate the classroom in a way that does not cause damage to the walls, ceilings, or floors. Nothing larger than a small nail should be used to hang things on the walls. Teachers should not use tape to affix anything to a wall or window. Teachers may not paint classrooms except with prior permission. In decorating your classroom, avoid clutter. Simplicity is beautiful and gives students room to think.
- All classrooms at American Classical Academy Rutherford must display the following signs prominently at the front of the room:
 - School's Mission
 - School Pledge
 - Honor Code
- Every teacher must display a copy of their daily schedule inside their classroom.

Homework

Homework is an important part of a classical education. Students who do not actively and consistently contribute to their own education, both in class and at home, will fall behind and come up short in their pursuit of excellence. Every student will have some homework every day.

The expected daily homework time allotment for each grade is as follows:

Kindergarten	10 minutes plus family reading time
Grade 1	10 minutes plus family reading time
Grade 2	20 minutes plus reading time
Grade 3	30 minutes plus reading time
Grade 4	40 minutes plus reading time
Grade 5	50 minutes plus reading time
Grade 6	60 minutes plus reading time
Grade 7	70 minutes plus reading time
Grade 8	80 minutes plus reading time
Grades 9-12	90-120 minutes plus reading time

The designated times serve as guidelines and may vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the schedule, the student's organizational skills and study habits, the varying abilities of the students, and the nature of the assignments. Students are expected to learn how to use their time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor. It is generally understood that writing papers and studying for exams take more time than regular classroom assignments. For that reason, the end of a term does result in a peak in the homework load. Nonetheless, teachers should make every effort to give assignments in advance, and students should be encouraged to work on those

longer assignments steadily, so that students are able to manage their homework along with other activities and adequate sleep. In the Upper School, students will often have the opportunity of taking a study hall, thus reducing the amount of time at home that must be devoted to homework.

For poor or uncompleted work, teachers may require students to redo an assignment. At the discretion of the teacher, the 'redo assignment' may be addressed with a differing grade scale. Students are expected to complete all their homework.

Tests and Quizzes

General Guidance

- Upper School
 - Tests: a test should take the average student 40-50 minutes to complete. Tests cover a unit of work (for example, a chapter or two in History or Science, a book in Literature, a unit of Grammar). Tests must be announced to the students in advance. It is also advised that teachers spend a class period, or a portion of a class period, reviewing the material that will be assessed. Teachers may not allow students to use their notes or book on tests.
 - Quizzes: a quiz should take the average student no more than 25 minutes to complete. Quizzes can cover anything from last night's reading homework to a portion of a unit. Quizzes may be announced or unannounced (pop quizzes). Teachers may choose to allow their students to use their notes on specific quizzes (such as reading quizzes or pop quizzes).
 - Exams: A 2-hour assessment is given in each class at the end of each semester. The assessment counts for 10% of the semester grade. Review sheets must be given to the students at least two weeks before the final exam date.
- Lower School
 - Grades K-2: The content and amount of written work, including tests and quizzes, should depend on the class's place within the literacy and orthography programs. Students should not be writing beyond their phonemic awareness. History, Science, and Literature assessments at these grade levels may be oral, aural, or pictorial. The assessments for Literacy and Math are prescribed by the Literacy Essentials and Singapore Mathematics programs, respectively.
 - Grades 3-6: Students at these grade levels should not be held to the expectations outlined above for Upper School students. However, teachers should be mindful of their students' abilities and progress throughout the year, and as they matriculate into grades 5 and 6, in order to create appropriate assessments. Tests at these grade levels should take the average student 20-35 minutes, depending on the specific grade level. Teachers should not give more than one test per day. A one- or two-page review sheet should be given to the students in advance.
 - Lower School students will not have semester exams.
- Proctoring: Teachers are to actively proctor all assessments. Teachers should spread desks out as precautionary measures. Teachers must go over directions and answer

questions before the test begins. Teachers must circulate frequently around the room and up and down the rows. Students are to raise their hand for tissues or to sharpen pencils.

Test Calendar

In Grades 7 and 8 no section of students may have more than one test, essay, or major project due on the same day. In Grades 9-12, students may have no more than 2 tests, essays, or major projects due on the same day. In all grades, teachers should not give students more than 3 tests, essays, or major projects per week.

Study Guides

It is important to make use of study guides in a thoughtful way. Used poorly, a study guide could cause students to think that their only task is memorization, not deeper thinking, or it could increase a student's anxiety about a test. Here are some general points about study guides to help you design them well:

- Open-ended questions as a study guide are better than a list of points to memorize. Sometimes both will be necessary, but do not reduce the content to a list of factual points.
- Use the study guide to show the parents and students that what we are teaching is fascinating, open-ended, and it is food for rich discussion. (Remember that we are not going for mastery in all things. Some things cannot be mastered.)
- In Grades K-6, the study guide should be no more than 1 page. Provide a list of questions on one side, and then answers on the flip side. Simple, straightforward.
- Open-ended questions are great: Rather than "List all of the steps of mitosis in order," say "Tell me about mitosis." A study guide worded this way makes it easier for parents to study with students at home.
- Remember that tests should be predictable. The study guide should be more challenging than the actual test. Use a study guide to show students the depth and complexity of the subject but then be very reasonable in your expectations for a test.

Test Corrections

It is a very good idea to have students do test corrections after a test so they have an opportunity to learn what they missed. But, do not include the grade for test corrections in the same category as the test itself—include it as a homework or participation grade. That way a student's grades will reflect whether or not the student passed the test and understands the materials.

Grading

General Guidance

- A student's grade should reflect their mastery of the content in each subject matter. The mastery of that content will be achieved through the use of good study skills and habits, but it should reflect their knowledge of the content, primarily. In other words, in general, a student should not receive an F on their quiz because they did not write their name on it. It would be appropriate for them to lose a certain amount of points because they did not use the study skill of following directions, but if they know the material, they should pass the quiz. The opposite is also true. If they don't know the content at all, but follow directions perfectly, they should not pass the assignment. If a student is failing because

they are not turning in their work, it is a behavioral problem. The teacher should reach out to the parents, and notify the Assistant Head of School and Head of School.

- Be very intentional about assigning work that is appropriate to the grade level being taught. It will be helpful to discuss types of assignments with other teachers, especially those that teach the level above or below. Teachers should be communicating about the skills and abilities that students have mastered, are learning, and will be learning in each grade.
- In general, items should be graded within a week of the due date. Projects, essays, and tests should be graded within two weeks of their due date. Please enter a missing assignment immediately in the gradebook for homework that is not turned in, even if you haven't graded the assignment yet. This enables you to follow the late work policy with consistency.
- When grades for a marking period (half a quarter) are finalized, any students who have below a 'C-' grade in a class (below 70%) will be ruled ineligible for school athletics or clubs for the following marking period.
- Remember that in classes students take for high school credit, students need to earn both half-credits to pass the course.

Grading Scale

Grading and the administration of grades is not the primary goal of education and educators. The grade a student receives in a class is subordinate to the knowledge the student acquires. Still, grades are a useful tool to evaluate the extent to which a student has mastered a particular subject. Therefore, grades will be assigned in all classes and subjects. American Classical Academy Rutherford will assign grades in order to accurately reflect the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject.

Grade inflation is discouraged. In relation to the student's performance, the following letter grades have these meanings:

- Mastery (A)
- Proficiency (B)
- Sufficiency/Competence (C)
- Insufficiency (D)
- Failing (F)

In addition to these general parameters, American Classical Academy Rutherford uses a 4.0 grading scale. The letter and numerical grades for this system are listed below:

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	GPA
A	94-100%	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	84-86	3.0
B-	80-83	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	74-76	2.0
C-	70-73	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	64-66	1.0
D-	60-63	0.7
F	0-59	0.0

The grading scale as defined above is utilized for all students with the exception of kindergarten and first grade, where the scale will reflect A (Mastery), B (Proficiency), C (Sufficiency), and I (Needs Improvement and Remediation). Incompletes will only be given under special circumstances and must be approved by the Head of School. Parents and students will be regularly informed of the student’s progress.

“Extra credit,” whether to make up for work not turned in on time or to increase a student’s grade, is discouraged at American Classical Academy Rutherford.

Grades will be broken down into four categories and assigned as portions of the student’s overall grade as follows:

- Classwork (includes any work done in class, including class participation): 40%
- Homework: 10%
- Quizzes and other small assessments: 20%
- Tests: 30% (In the Upper School, the final semester assessment: 10%; all other tests: 20%)

Progress Reports

- At the beginning of the school year, it is important that each teacher sets up his grade book in PowerSchool right away. Training will be provided regarding initial set-up of the gradebook.
- Students and parents should always have access to a student's own grades in the PowerSchool gradebook.
- Teachers should contact parents of students who have D's or F's (or "Needs Improvement" or below in Grades K and 1) before each quarterly progress report.

Report Cards

- Report cards are made available to parents via PowerSchool at the end of each quarter. All grades for the quarter must be entered into PowerSchool no later than close of business on the designated report card days on the calendar.
- Teachers should contact parents of students who have D's or F's (or "Needs Improvement" in the Grades K and 1) before each report card.
- Thoughtful, specific, appropriate comments are encouraged for all students, and required for all students who have D's or F's (or "Needs Improvement" in the Grades K and 1).
- Only semester grades will count toward a student's grade point average in the Upper School (grades 7-12). A semester grade for a class is the average (rounded to a tenth) of the numeric grades (percentages) from the two quarters in that semester.
- In order to calculate a GPA, numeric grades are converted into points based on the grading scales above. Points are awarded for each class at the end of a semester. The semester GPA is calculated by totaling those points and averaging them by the number of classes taken that semester. A final GPA is determined by adding all the points from each semester and averaging them. GPAs are rounded to a hundredth.

Academic Concern Process

NWEA testing will be conducted within the first month of the school year. This data will be used by the administrative team to identify students with serious academic concerns.

Once these students are identified, the teacher must begin the appropriate interventions, such as small group work.

Required parent communication and who is responsible:

- Parent Conference in September (after first NWEA testing and first progress report) (Teacher)
- Parent Communication on progress – October-December (Teacher)
- Parent Communication following midyear NWEA testing - January (Teacher)
- Parent Conference concerning progress - February (Teacher and SSD)
- Parent Conference on final determination of retention – April (Teacher, SSD, and Head of School)

Conference notes must be signed by everyone in attendance and kept for every conference.

When a student begins MTSS, there must be a conference and written notification from the Head of School. This letter must be signed by a parent and filed in MTSS folder.

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students must demonstrate that they are reading on grade level or making significant progress toward that goal.

RTI² and MTSS Procedures

Teachers must begin the RTI² process and document it in MTSS when a student is not making adequate progress in the general education classroom based on assessments and classroom work.

Parents must be notified when a tier is started or when the student is moving tiers.

Tier 2 is a group of 1-6 students with whom you are required to meet at least three times per week. You need one data point every two weeks. Students should stay at Tier 2 for 6 weeks. If they are making progress, continue with Tier 2. If they are not making progress, they move to Tier 3. You must keep a log of all interventions. NOTE: If a student moves to Tier 3, they must also continue to receive Tier 2.

Tier 3 is a group of 1-3 students with whom you must meet 5 days per week. A data point must be entered at least once per week. Students will stay in Tier 3 for 6 weeks. If they are making progress, continue with Tier 3. If they are not making progress, an ESE Evaluation needs to be opened. You must keep a log of all interventions. Provide all documentation to the Student Services Director in order to open the evaluation. NOTE: Before moving a student to Tier 3, an observation must be completed by the Student Services Director and another letter must be sent home and signed by parents.

Contact the Student Services Director for any RTI²/MTSS-related questions or if you need assistance during this process.

Student Ambassadors

Lower School Classroom Ambassadors

When an administrator or guest enters the classroom, an assigned classroom ambassador is to approach the visitor and say the following greeting script:

“Good morning/afternoon, sir/ma’am. Welcome to Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr. _____’s classroom. My name is _____. We are currently studying _____.”

The classroom ambassador then shakes the visitors’ hands and returns to the ambassador’s seat at which point instruction promptly resumes.

Upper School Student Ambassadors

Upper School students will have the opportunity to apply for a role as an ACAR Ambassador. To apply, students must write an essay detailing which of our School’s virtues they believe to be the most important and why, complete the ACAR Ambassadors questionnaire, and engage in an interview conducted by the Head of School and Assistant Head of School. The criteria for selection include academic and behavioral success, maturity, and a commitment to the mission and virtues of American Classical Academy Rutherford.

Selected students will be assigned duties that include providing school tours for visitors, greeting and assisting younger students during morning and afternoon carline each day, and other duties as necessary.

ACAR Ambassadors will be given a pin to wear on their shirt collars so they are identifiable.

V. Communication

Communication with Administration

On the Role of the Head of School

The Head of School at American Classical Academy Rutherford is the sole report to the Board of Directors, and, as such, is ultimately responsible for managing all school operations. The role is similar to the role of a CEO in many organizations, with the unique difference being that the Head of School is also a teacher. Both the terms “principal” and “headmaster,” which are traditional titles for a school leader, have their etymological roots in the idea of teaching—with the former referring to the “principal” or main teacher and the latter referring to the lead “master,” which is an old word for teacher. While the Head of School is responsible for much more than teaching, he/she regards this as his/her first and essential function, as this is the first and essential function of the School.

Because the role of Head of School encompasses so much, he/she has delegated responsibility for specific areas and tasks across the faculty and staff. As much as possible, he/she recommends that concerns within the school be handled according to the principle of subsidiarity—at the most local level. If you have a concern, question, or recommendation, please bring it to the person who is most immediately responsible. If you are unable to resolve the matter at that level, you may bring the concern to the attention of the appropriate member of the school leadership team (Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Student Service Director, Literacy Coordinator, Facility Manager, Business Manager).

Finally, it is the established practice of the Head of School to support and defend the school and the actions taken by faculty and staff. We operate best as a team, and the Head of School will never intentionally undermine the good efforts of ACAR employees, especially when communicating with those who are not an immediate part of that faculty/staff team. But faculty and staff should bear in mind that this is an established practice, not a policy, and it will be employed prudentially.

The Role of Other Administrators

- Assistant Head of School and Student Service Director, alongside the Head of School, is responsible for student discipline and school culture.
- Literacy Coordinator and Student Service Director, alongside the Head of School, is responsible for curriculum and teacher coaching.
- Business Manager and Facility Manager, alongside the Head of School, is responsible for the school’s finances and physical plant. He/she manages human resources functions, budgets, payroll, security, maintenance, and other non-academic matters.

Professional Development

- All teachers must attend weekly Professional Development. No other activities, including extracurriculars, sports, parent-teacher conferences, or meetings may be scheduled at this time.
- There is a weekly newsletter sent to all faculty and staff each Friday evening with a letter from the Head of School, a list of upcoming events, and resources for learning more about effective teaching. These should be read every week, including listening to/watching/reading suggested podcasts, videos, and articles.

- It is common practice that a book is assigned that will guide Professional Development. It is expected that staff will read these books on schedule and participate in Socratic discussions of them.
- All teachers will be observed regularly with the intention of partnering with teachers and reflecting on each teacher's practice in a specific effort to continue strengthening and developing as educators. A commitment to constant improvement is a prerequisite of being a teacher at American Classical Academy Rutherford.

Communication with Faculty

General Guidance

Talking about one another in the right way is essential to preserving our relationships in the community. We should be positive about the other members of the community and never gossip. When an issue needs to be addressed, it should be done through clear and direct communication and only among the parties directly involved. This applies, of course, to faculty speaking about one another and the school.

Special care should be taken to speak about students charitably, especially when they are struggling. A student is entitled to a good reputation and to being well thought of by faculty and other students. Faculty should build up the student with positive reinforcement at every opportunity. In speaking among ourselves we should be careful to distinguish between constructive speech about students (i.e. speaking about a student's good qualities, or discussing a student's behavioral/academic struggles in a charitable manner with the aim of searching for some solutions) and idle chatter, such as venting our frustrations, blowing off steam, or mocking. The communication of a student's problems or wrongdoing should be made only to those with a "need to know," and only with the aim of working to solve those problems.

Faculty members are expected to comport themselves in a manner which brings honor to ACAR and its student body. Dealings with students, parents, and the public must be courteous and professional.

Inappropriate language (obscenity, profanity, or vulgarity), references, or contact between teacher and student, teacher and teacher, or teacher and parent will not be tolerated.

With Parents

General Guidance

What to Do:

- Remember that parents need to hear the good along with the bad, and that you can establish a good relationship with parents by getting to know them through discussions about their child's successes. If a parent knows that you see the good in the student, conversations about discipline will be much more effective. Make a point of saying something positive about each student each semester.
- Notify parents directly if a student shows a sharp drop in behavior or performance, or performs poorly on a major assignment. No parent should be surprised by the grades or comments on a progress report or report card. No parent should be surprised by news that is shared at a conference.

- Keep emails brief, professional, and kind. If something requires a long discussion, make that happen over the phone or in person.

What Not to Do:

- Do not interact with parents or students via text message, and retain a formal tone in all your correspondence. You are a professional and your communication should reflect the professional nature of your relationship with students and families.
- Do not interact with parents through social media. Parents should communicate with teachers via email regarding school related matters.
- Do not talk about your work life on social media in a way that reflects negatively on the school or could be perceived that way. As an employee of American Classical Academy Rutherford you are a representative of the school even when you're not at work. Everything you write on Facebook, Instagram or other social media is public even if your profile settings are private.

Weekly Newsletters or Emails

Teachers need to send home a weekly newsletter or email to all students' parents with updates on what they are studying, dates of upcoming assessments, and other important information. In the Lower School, teachers who are teaching the same grade are certainly encouraged to collaborate regarding the weekly newsletter to ensure that similar concepts are being covered.

Parent Conferences

- Parent Conferences are held at the end of the First and Third Quarters.
- Teachers should come to conferences prepared to briefly discuss the really important things in specific terms. Remember that knowing a student's grades does not mean knowing the student, and that there are many important things happening at school that cannot be explained in numbers and percentages. Sometimes it is helpful to put your gradebook to the side. Instead, use your time with parents to get to the heart of the issue, talking about the virtues a student has displayed, the content he or she has been learning, and his or her enthusiasm for the life of the mind. These are the kinds of conferences that will be helpful in the long run.

Report Cards

At the end of the second and fourth quarters, teachers should provide extensive comments on students' report cards. These comments serve in lieu of a parent-teacher conference, but are not a substitute for regular parent communication.

As you prepare report card comments, consider the following:

- Remember that your comments on the report card have several audiences and you should write with each of them in mind.
 - The parents. Our goal is to give them an accurate understanding of how their child is doing and information about how they can help us and their child at home. Remember that the subject of a child's progress is a very personal one to a parent, and accordingly we must be gentle. However, do not shy away from telling the truth.

- The student. Remember that your students are likely to read what you write, either now or in the future.
- Your colleagues. These report cards will go into students' files in the office, and your colleagues will read them for years to come as the student gets older. Strive to give a thorough picture of how the student is currently doing, and give some information about what you are doing, too. Information like this is invaluable when a teacher is getting to know a student at the beginning of a new school year.
- Your future self and other teachers writing letters of recommendation. Remember that report cards are often saved for years and years, and they will be read several times over the course of a student's childhood. Take the time to make them worth reading and informative.
- Whenever possible, begin and end your comments by saying something positive about each student. There is no need to varnish the truth, but you should be as encouraging as you can. There is something good going on with every student.
- Be specific in your recommendations. Rather than say that "Student X needs to put in more effort," explain exactly what he needs to do better, like studying for tests the week before rather than the night before, or taking more careful notes. If a student is doing well, it is not enough to say "Student X is a bright student and I enjoy having her in class." Explain further. What is she particularly good at? What can she do to improve? There is always something.
- You should not copy and paste comments. Please write something original for each student.
- Your comments should explain how the student has been doing, but also what you have been doing to help. If you have discussed a student's difficulties with parents before and tried something different after speaking with them, mention that. For example, many Upper School students were struggling after 9 weeks because they were not being consistent with their planners. If you have been helping by doing planner checks, mention that, and explain what results you have seen.
- The comments should be extensive, but even more important is that they are thoughtful. The quality of what you write will be determined by the thinking that you do before you sit down to write. Please do not expect to write all of your comments in one sitting. Write a few a day and really put some thought into them. How much you write will depend on who you teach. Here are some specific guidelines by grade and subject:
 - K-6 (Lower School) classroom teachers. Please say something specific about the student's performance in each subject. You should have at least 2 sentences about how your students have been doing in math, science, history, literature, and literacy/grammar. Treat these subjects separately.
 - K-6 (Lower School) Art, Music, and PE. You teach many students. You should communicate with parents throughout the year, making sure to keep a log and send meaningful notes for each student once per semester.
 - 7-12 (Upper School). Please write at least 3-4 thoughtful sentences about each student. Please address each student's academic performance in your class (knowledge of the material, study habits) and, if you know a student well, please say something about his or her character as well.
 - Special education. Please write 3-4 thoughtful sentences about the students you work with.

Volunteers

Every year we request that our families prioritize volunteer time on campus. This means, we hope, that there will be a substantial amount of help from parents.

Teachers, if you have a parent volunteering for your classroom, it is very important that you are clear about how the parent can be helpful. Do not be afraid to ask if you need something, and when you ask, be very specific. The parent is there to help you, and could end up being very unhelpful if you are not clear about what needs to be done.

Also remember that you can never be too grateful to a parent, and that volunteers love to be thanked.

In IEP/504 Meetings

- Understand that an accommodation allows the student access to the regular curriculum. A modification is a change to the regular curriculum. Most of the time, we are working with accommodations.
- Teachers and members of the student services team should meet before the meeting to determine modifications/accommodations that will be suggested at the meeting.
- Before the meeting, have RTI² data documented appropriately.
- The Student Services Director or another representative of the student services team will lead the meeting.
- Remember, students with a disability who qualify for a 504/IEP are required by federal law to receive whatever services they need to succeed in the classroom. Do not indicate that we will not/cannot provide certain services. We may suggest alternative accommodations/ modifications that fit in with our philosophy and school culture, but we cannot deny a service that is needed.
- Our focus is on providing an education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): the goal for modifications/accommodations is as close to the normal classroom environment as possible.
- Be positive. Emphasize and point out the student's strengths.
- Keep in mind that we are working WITH the parents. The atmosphere should be that of a team meeting.
- Listen to the parents. Sometimes what is going on at school does not manifest at home, and sometimes what is going on at home does not happen at school.
- Refrain from attributing motivation to behavior. Point out observable behaviors at school, in an objective manner. For instance: Not "He daydreams during lecture," but "He is not able to answer check for understanding questions and he doesn't copy the notes from the board without frequent reminders."

Grievance Policy

Grievance Related to the Classroom

ACAR firmly believes that adults must be models of good character even in the most difficult situations. Should a parent have a grievance concerning a particular class or the administration of the school, that grievance should be resolved using the following internal communication procedure. Issues that arise in a particular classroom should always be addressed to the teacher first since the teacher always has more direct knowledge of the student than anyone else.

- The Teacher: Parents should schedule a meeting with the teacher through the office. Under no circumstance is it ever acceptable for a parent to confront a teacher about an issue with students present, including his/her own.
- Assistant Head of School or designee: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent should speak with the Assistant Head of School or another appropriate administrator as recommended by the Assistant Head of School.
- The Head of School: If the appropriate administrator is unable to adequately address the issue, the parent should discuss the matter with the Head of School.
- The Board: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the Head of School, the parent should refer the matter to the Board, preferably in writing.

Grievance Related to Administration

For grievances regarding an administrator who reports to the Head of School, the grievance should be directed to the individual first, then the Head of School. If necessary, grievances left unresolved by the Head of School should be submitted in writing to the Board. Grievances regarding the Head of School should be directed to the individual first, then in writing to the Board.

Communicating with the Media

- It is important that ACAR speak with a single, unified voice when communicating with the Press. Should you be contacted by the media, please refer the contact to the Head of School.
- Only the Head of School and his/her designee are permitted to speak with members of the Press about ACAR.
- It is the general practice of ACAR to be open to public interest and inquiry, including inviting local media outlets to cover significant events and features at the school. All faculty and staff are expected to help participate in good communication with the public and the Press, and to be ambassadors of the school and the school community.
- At the direction of the Head of School or his/her designee, faculty and staff may be asked to participate in photos or stories for use in social or traditional media on behalf of the school or one of our institutional partners. Faculty and staff are not required to participate, but those who do not wish to participate should provide reasonable notice in writing to the Head of School. The school will make significant effort to honor requests for privacy, but may not be able to honor retroactive requests.

VI. Employee Procedures

Fingerprinting and Background Investigation

All faculty and staff are required to successfully pass a background check, which includes fingerprinting, before employment begins.

Security and Inspection

General Comments on Security

Maintaining the security of American Classical Academy Rutherford's buildings and vehicles is every employee's responsibility. Employees must develop habits that ensure security as a matter of course.

- Always keep cash properly secured. An employee who is aware that cash is insecurely stored should immediately inform the person responsible.
- Employees should know the location of all alarms and fire extinguishers and be familiar with the proper procedure for using them.
- Employees leaving school premises should ensure that windows are shut and doors are locked. The last employee on the premises should make sure all entrances are properly locked and secured.
- Employees exiting the building after normal hours or on the weekend who leave a door unlocked or ajar will be subject to disciplinary action and may have their keys taken away.
- Employees who are given keys shall be responsible for the cost of lost keys and/or re-keying.
- Be watchful that no unauthorized or suspicious persons are on school property. Always check for identification badges on visitors and volunteers, and immediately report the presence of any suspicious persons to the Head of School or another member of the leadership team.
- Do not lend keys, security passes, or identification badges to anyone who is not authorized to possess them.
- The School is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property.

Security Procedures

- Security drills will always be announced, and drills will be used for all three kinds of security procedures (see below).
- In the event a security issue arises, it is important for teachers to keep students calm, take attendance, and make sure that all students are accounted for.
- The Head of School will decide when the building is safe and announce when to return to normal procedures.
- There are three general security procedures:
 - LOCKOUT: The outside doors are locked. Students are kept in the classroom. Transitions between buildings are suspended. A LOCKOUT may be called for in the event of threatening or violent behavior in the neighborhood or outside of the building.
 - LOCKDOWN: The outside doors are locked. All inside classroom doors are locked. Teachers should close the blinds and cover the door windows. Turn off the lights. Students should be quiet in a corner or closet. If any classes are outside,

they should go to the nearest classroom. A LOCKDOWN may be called for a threat inside of the building.

- EVACUATION: [Detail where students should go and any other expectations here.] An EVACUATION may occur in the case of a bomb threat, gas leak, or fire.
- Reminders:
 - Use common sense, especially in the first few weeks of school. Remember that new students are not familiar with all the rules and need your support.
 - The entire faculty and staff are to enforce compliance with school rules at all times, not just in the classroom.

Authority to Search

The School may exercise its right to inspect all classrooms, desks, and closed containers entering and leaving the premises. School rooms, furniture, and electronic devices are school property and may be subjected to searches at any time, with or without cause. Employee email accounts and other software-related tools purchased by the school are similarly the property of the school and may be subject to search.

Additional Emergency Procedures

ACAR administration, in conjunction with local authorities and with approval from the Board of Directors, has developed an Emergency Procedures Manual to address a variety of possible emergencies. This manual is available for review in the school office, and questions about it can be directed to the Head of School or the Facility Manager. Staff and faculty will be notified of any special roles they are expected to fill in specific emergencies.

Time-Off Requests

When requesting time off, email both the Head of School and the Business Manager.

A sub folder containing the following items must be kept near the teacher desk in the classroom:

- Three full days of emergency lesson plans. These lesson plans should contain enough material for one full lesson in each subject each day, including activities, worksheets (one copy for each student already made), and suggestions for reading material.
- Contact information (including phone numbers) for the Head of School, the Assistant Head of School and the Main Office.
- A complete class roster
- A schedule of the day that begins with morning assembly and ends with afternoon pick up. Please provide detailed instructions for each lesson of the day and clear information about how the sub should handle assembly, recess, lunch, and pick-up.
- List of students with health issues or medical needs
- List of students who are especially helpful and those who can be difficult in class, along with tips for working with these students.
- Teacher duties and other responsibilities
- An explanation of classroom rules, including lining up, using the restroom, going to the drinking fountain, and rules for recess.
- Some instructions for classroom discipline, especially procedures or systems that are unique to your classroom.

- **Planned Absences:**
 - All requests must be submitted at least a week in advance and approved by the Head of School.
 - Ensure that your sub folder is up-to-date, and meet with the assigned substitute teacher, if able.
 - Provide unique lesson plans for each subject for each day in addition to your regular emergency lesson plans.

- **Emergency Absence**
 - If you are feeling ill and unsure about the next day, put the request in the night before via email. If you are feeling better the next morning, the absence can be canceled.
 - Ensure that your emergency sub binder is up to date at all times. All copies, rosters, daily schedule, list of students who have health problems/take medications, duties, and supervisory responsibilities must be included within the binder.

Substitute Teachers

ACAR administration endeavors to use a consistent pool of substitute teachers. These substitute teachers have already provided the necessary background checks and paperwork to the school, and they are generally familiar with the school's culture and expectations. In some cases, they may be invited to attend professional development alongside full time members of the faculty. They are, however, part-time employees and they are a limited resource; it is therefore essential that faculty provide notice of planned leave as soon as possible so that a substitute can be secured.

Professional Development and Reimbursement

Professional development is a high priority of American Classical Academy Rutherford. All faculty members are expected to attend summer Barney Charter School Initiative K-12 training, which is typically held the last few weeks of June.

Board members, administrators, faculty, and staff should seek out opportunities to deepen or broaden both knowledge and ability to assure the highest quality professionals are working in the School. Reimbursement of such activities is at the discretion of the Board of Directors and Head of School. These activities include but are not limited to: courses, workshops, conferences, exchange programs, participation on committees, etc. The activity must be specifically tied to the area of teaching or role in the School to be considered. Availability of funds, time of request, cost of activity, and academic value will all play a role in the level of reimbursement available and the approval of the request.

ACAR strives to provide resources that will cover both the cost of the activity and other expenses related to it (transportation, lodging, meals). Faculty and staff are asked to be frugal, treating the School's funds as if they were their own. For activities that are away from the city or state, it is acceptable for family members to accompany a faculty or staff member or for the

faculty of staff member to extend a stay to spend time with friends or family. However, these arrangements must be pre-approved and are at the expense of the attendee.

Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS mileage rates. Mileage will not be reimbursed for courses earning credit toward a degree. Reimbursement for mileage may not exceed the cost of an airline ticket, unless there is an overall savings to the school. To be reimbursed for driving, employees must submit an online map from the place of origin to the destination.

Personnel Files

It is your responsibility to keep your personal contact information up-to-date. If you have a change in any of the following items, please be sure to notify the Business Manager as soon as possible:

- Legal name
- Home address or mailing address
- Home telephone number
- Emergency Contact
- Number of dependents
- Marital status
- Change of beneficiary
- Driving record or status of driver's license, if you operate any School vehicles
- Military or draft status
- Exemptions on your W-4 tax form
- Any other matters that will affect your status as an employee.

The school requires official transcripts and evidence of relevant licensure to be on file.

You may review your personal personnel file if you wish (unless information is restricted by law), and you may request and receive copies of all documents you have signed. To obtain these, please make arrangements with the Main Office staff.

Observations, Coaching and Evaluations

The Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Student Service Director, and the Literacy Coordinator will informally observe classes frequently and provide teachers with copies of their observations with feedback.

Additionally, teachers can expect to take part annually in a formal observation process with the Head of School or the Assistant Head of School. In addition to evaluating staff practice through the 'Classical Education lens', ACAR will be using the TN-TEAM (Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model) to annually evaluate teachers. These formal observations will be scheduled at least one week in advance and will include a follow-up meeting with the evaluator. These observations will be part of a teacher's annual evaluation.

In addition to the weekly Professional Development meeting, first year teachers are expected to take part in a weekly meeting for first year teachers with the Head of School.

Non-Academic Staff Evaluations

The Head of School or the Assistant Head of School will periodically review the work performance of non-academic staff.

Evaluations are a means for increasing the quality and value of employee work performance. Employee initiative, effort, attitude, job knowledge, and other factors will be addressed. Employees must understand that a positive evaluation does not guarantee a pay raise or continued employment. Pay raises and promotions are based on numerous factors, only one of which is job performance.

VII. Employee Policies

Advertisement of Employment Opportunities

In order to attract the best faculty and staff, ACAR strives to post all open positions on the School's website and utilize other local and national services. Questions regarding an opening or potential employment should be directed to the Head of School.

Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy

The School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (including cyber-bullying) of any student on school property or at school-sponsored events. A safe and civil environment in the School is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation and bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, are conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the School's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate bullying.

ACAR values the free exchange of ideas. Classroom discussion of ideas and opinions, including controversial subject matter, shall not be construed as harassment.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any deliberate or intentional gesture, or any deliberate or intentional written, verbal, or physical act or threat that an individual has exhibited toward another Student or Staff member and the behavior both: (1) has one or more of the following effects: (a) harming a Student or Staff member; (b) damaging a Student's or Staff member's property; (c) placing a Student or Staff member in reasonable fear of harm to the Student's or Staff member's person; (d) placing a Student or Staff member in reasonable fear of damage to the Student's or Staff member's property; and (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a Student or Staff member.

The School prohibits acts of cyberbullying, which is a subset of bullying and involves the use of information and communication technologies, including but not limited to email, text messages, blogs, social media to support deliberate or repeated, or hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm, intimidate or harass others on School time or the School premises, at School events, programs or activities or off School time or School premises if such acts affect other Students or Staff of the School.

The School reserves the right to discipline an individual's off campus behavior which substantially disrupts the School's educational process or mission or threatens the safety or well-being of a Student or Staff member. Some factors which may be considered in determining whether the behavior warrants discipline include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) whether behavior created material and substantial disruption to the educational process or School's mission due to the stress on the individual(s) victimized or the time invested by Staff in dealing with the behavior or its consequences; (2) whether a nexus to on-campus activities exists; (3) whether the behavior creates a substantial interference with a Student's or Staff member's security or right to educate and receive education; (4) whether the behavior invades the privacy of others; or (5) whether any threat is deemed to be a true threat by the administration or Board,

using factors and guidelines set out by the courts or by common sense, reasonable person standards.

Some acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying and cyber-bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying that they require a response either at the classroom, School building or by law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for individuals who commit an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or removal.

All School employees, volunteers and students are required to report prohibited incidents of which they are aware to the Head of School or his/her designee. The Head of School or his/her designee is then responsible for determining whether an alleged incident constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the Head of School or his/her designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the reported incident, and prepare a report documenting the prohibited incident that is reported. Once an investigation is completed, and the reported incident has been substantiated, the parent or guardian of any student involved in the prohibited incident shall be notified and to the extent permitted by law have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident. The School will maintain, via the education management information system, information regarding the number of incidents of harassment of Students against other Students, in each building and School-wide, that violates this policy. All School employees, volunteers and Students shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy.

The School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any victim or person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Head of School or his/her designee after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with School policies and procedures. Nothing in this policy prohibits a victim from seeking redress under any provision of Tennessee law that may apply.

The School may form a prevention task force and/or programs to educate students about this policy, such as holding an assembly on harassment, intimidation and bullying for Parents and Students, to raise the level of awareness and help prevent the prohibited conduct. The School may also provide training, workshops, or courses on this policy to school employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students.

Sexual Harassment/Abuse

American Classical Academy Rutherford maintains a working environment free from sexual harassment/abuse and insists that all faculty, staff, and students be treated with dignity, respect, and courtesy.

Harassment/abuse on the basis of sex is a violation of federal law. In addition to being illegal, sexual harassment/abuse will be considered a breach of professional conduct. Any conduct or

communication which constitutes sexual harassment/abuse is strictly prohibited. Any faculty or staff member guilty of such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Sexual harassment/abuse is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other conduct of a sexual nature whereby:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment or educational development.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions, including decisions to hire or terminate, promote or demote, or grant or deny privileges or benefits.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Repeated, offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions, verbal "kidding," abuse, or harassment;
- Continued or repeated verbal remarks of a sexual or demeaning nature;
- Graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body;
- Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual;
- Displays of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
- Sexually explicit language or jokes;
- Pressure for sexual activity;
- Unwelcome touching of any kind;
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, employment status, or similar personal concerns.

A faculty or staff member may file a report of sexual harassment with the Head of School or Board of Directors. Students may report a case of sexual harassment/abuse to a teacher or any member of the school leadership team. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the greatest extent possible. Reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status or affect future employment, work assignments, or grades.

The School strongly encourages faculty and staff who believe they have been sexually harassed to report such incidents using the following procedure. All faculty and staff, including those who file complaints, as well as those accused but found to be innocent, will be afforded protection from retaliation within the work environment.

- A faculty or staff member believing that he has been sexually harassed should immediately report the incident to the Head of School. If the Head of School is the alleged cause of the problem, or seems unwilling to resolve the issue, the faculty or staff member should contact the Board of Directors, preferably in writing.
- Every reported incident of sexual harassment will be thoroughly and promptly investigated by the Head of School. The Head of School, and all faculty and staff involved in the investigation, will respect the confidences and sensitivities of all persons involved in the incident. All involved individuals are expected to cooperate.

- If, after investigation, the Head of School determines that the charges of sexual harassment are substantiated, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken. The disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, a verbal warning, transfers, demotions, or terminations.
- The Head of School will promptly communicate to the faculty and staff involved the results of the investigation.
- If the alleged victim or the accused disagrees with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the Board of Directors within five days of notification of the results. After considering the appeal, the Board of Directors will render the final decision regarding the incident.

The School requires that faculty and staff who suspect sexual harassment/abuse of a student report it to child protective services.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

American Classical Academy Rutherford is a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. Drug and alcohol use by faculty or staff members is not tolerated on school premises. A conviction of an alcohol or drug related crime will result in termination.

Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor or the Head of School within 5 days of any arrest or conviction.

Smoking is prohibited in the building and on the property, including the parking lot. Faculty and staff are expected to set a positive example for students concerning the use of tobacco by following the district and state laws regarding tobacco possession and its use.

If drug use is suspected while an employee is at work or at any school-related event, the School may require a drug test. If an employee refuses the test, he or she may be terminated.

Accident Reporting

All accidents, whether or not resulting in personal injury, that you are involved in that arise out of or during the course of your employment, involving ACAR vehicles or your vehicle while doing business for ACAR, ACAR equipment, or people, no matter how trivial, must be reported to the Head of School as soon as practical, including injuries or conditions that manifest themselves at a later time. This ensures that proper treatment is provided and enables us to comply with the workers' compensation laws.

In the case of a serious or life-threatening injury, contact 911 immediately and then notify your supervisor.

Any illness or injury you sustain in recreational activities on School, regardless of when such activities are conducted, are your sole responsibility. The School assumes no responsibility for any such illness or injury.

Family Education and Privacy Act (FERPA)

For more details on FERPA, see ACAR's Family Handbook.

Student education records are official and confidential documents protected by one of the nation's strongest privacy protection laws, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). FERPA applies to schools that receive federal education funds, and non-compliance can result in the loss of those funds.

Confidential education records include, but are not limited to, student registration forms, graded papers, student information displayed on a computer screen and social security numbers linked to names. All employees who work with or around education records are required to keep this information strictly confidential and secure in order to protect the rights of students.

FERPA provides that:

- Parents have the right to inspect and review their child's education records, to the exclusion of third parties. These rights are transferred to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level ("Eligible Student").
- Parents and Eligible Students have the right to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading.
- Institutions may not disclose information about students, nor permit inspection of students' records, without written permission from the parent or eligible student, unless such action is covered by certain exceptions as stipulated in FERPA.

Intellectual Property Rights

American Classical Academy Rutherford uses curricula, resources, and training from the Barney Charter School Initiative American Classical Education K-12 program, and these are provided through a licensing agreement. The materials themselves are the intellectual property of the American Classical Education K-12 program and should be treated accordingly.

In the course of work at ACAR, teachers will develop curriculum maps, syllabi, lesson plans, assessments, and various other materials for use in their classrooms and the school community. With the exception of a teacher's own notes (e.g., lecture notes), these materials are the intellectual property of ACAR. When teachers are no longer employed at the school for any reason, they must turn in copies of all such materials to the Head of School or his designee. Teachers wishing to keep and/or use these materials outside of ACAR should consult with the Head of School.

The purpose of this arrangement is twofold: first, to establish that paid work done on behalf of ACAR is the property of the school, not the individual staff, faculty, or consultant; second, to ensure that the school builds on its institutional knowledge and experience each year despite faculty turnover.

Outside Employment

The School expects that a full-time position at the School is the employee's primary employment. Any outside activity must not interfere with the employee's ability to perform properly the job duties at the School.

Tutoring, Private Coaching, and Private Lessons

ACAR is a challenging school, and parents often ask teachers if they are willing to provide tutoring, private lessons, or individual athletic coaching outside of school hours. There are several types of tutoring available. If you would like to make yourself available for tutoring, please notify the Head of School. Please see below for guidelines.

- Tutoring from a teacher to a student enrolled in that teacher's class or on the coach's team: If a teacher or coach makes him or herself available before or after school to provide extra help, he or she may not charge the parent for providing that service, even if the parent offers to pay for it. Tutoring or coaching of this kind should always happen on campus or at the location of normal athletic practice.
- Tutoring from a teacher to a student not enrolled in that teacher's class: If a teacher is not responsible for grading a student, that teacher may accept money in exchange for tutoring or coaching the student as long as there is no other conflict of interest. Teachers may provide this service to students, but not on campus. They may charge the parent for the service.
- Private tutoring from other school students: Successful ACAR students in grades 9-12 may make themselves available for private tutoring on or off campus. Except in special circumstances, students should only tutor other students who are at least 2-3 grades younger. To apply to be a private tutor the student must first seek permission from the Head of School. After permission is granted the student's name will be added to the tutoring list available at the front office.

Communications and Computer Systems Security and Usage

ACAR's communications and computer systems are intended for business purposes and may be used only during working time; however, limited personal usage is permitted if it does not hinder performance of job duties or violate any other School policy. This includes voicemail, email and internet systems. Users have no legitimate expectation of privacy in regard to their use of the systems.

School administration may access the voicemail and e-mail systems and obtain the communications within the systems, including past voicemail and e-mail messages, without notice to users of the system, in the ordinary course of business when ACAR deems it appropriate to do so. The reasons for which ACAR may obtain such access include, but are not limited to, maintaining the system; preventing or investigating allegations of system abuse or misuse; assuring compliance with software copyright laws; complying with legal and regulatory requests for information; and ensuring that Academy operations continue appropriately during an employee's absence.

Further, ACAR may review Internet usage to ensure that such use with Academy property, or communications sent via the Internet with Academy property, are appropriate.

Since School communication and computer systems are intended for business use, all employees, upon request, must inform administration of any private access codes or passwords. Unauthorized duplication of copyrighted computer software violates the law and is strictly prohibited. No employee may access, or attempt to obtain access to, another employee's computer systems without appropriate authorization.

Non-Disparagement of the School

As an employee of ACAR, faculty and staff members have a special responsibility to represent the School to our community and beyond, and disparaging comments made by employees about the School are likely to substantially hurt the School's reputation. The ACAR Board and administration therefore expect that employees will not directly or indirectly defame, disparage, or publicly criticize the services, business, integrity, or reputation of the School, its Board, or its employees. Employees and former employees acting in violation of this expectation will be met with disciplinary consequences and/or legal action. Employees with grievances should follow the grievance protocols explained in this handbook and in the ACAR Family Handbook.

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Staff Honor Code

This Faculty/Staff Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with American Classical Academy Rutherford. This Handbook will serve as a guide; it is not the final word in all cases. Individual circumstances may call for individual attention.

Please read the following statements and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of the American Classical Academy Rutherford Faculty/Staff Handbook, and your willingness to serve the School’s mission and Staff Honor Code:

- I have received and read a copy of the Faculty/Staff Handbook. I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of the School’s Board of Directors at any time. I understand that this Handbook replaces (supersedes) all other previous handbooks.
- I further understand that all employment with the School is “at will,” which means that my employment can be terminated with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either the School or myself, except as otherwise provided by law.
- I understand that no employment agreement other than “at will” has been expressed or implied, and that no circumstances arising out of my employment will alter my “at will” employment relationship unless expressed in writing, with the understanding specifically set forth and signed by myself and the Head of School or Board of Directors of the School. I specifically understand that this Faculty/Staff Handbook does not constitute a contract between the School and me.
- I am aware that during the course of my employment confidential information will be made available to me. I understand that this information must not be given out or used outside of the School’s premises or with non-American Classical Academy Rutherford Faculty and staff other than ACAR’s Board of Directors. In the event of termination of employment, whether voluntary or involuntary, I hereby agree not to utilize or exploit this information with any other individual.
- I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and have received a copy of the Faculty/Staff Handbook.
- Faculty Pledge: I pledge to encourage my students to be honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. I will help my students aspire to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, responsibility, friendship, and wisdom. I will keep this pledge by my words and instruction, and also by my example.

Printed Name _____

Position _____

Employee Signature _____ Date _____